



2021

**POLISH
CULTURE
YEARBOOK**

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INTRODUCTION

Minister of Culture and National Heritage

According to the renowned Polish sociologist Stefan Czarnowski, '[...] culture is an environment in which people are, one could say, immersed, with each relationship between them determined by the culture of a given community. [...] A human individual is a product of this cultural community. As Staszic used to say, "a human being without company – that is without society – can hardly be construed". Neither could it be, one might add, without human accomplishments or legacy – the very content and form of human life that makes us something more than merely a gathering of representatives of one species, turning us into a salient living collective – a society'.¹ While this is a reference to Aristotle's concept of *politikon zoon*, with humans viewed as social beings, Czarnowski's words can help us realise the significance of the integrative and inclusive function of culture, and its general accessibility.

The difficult experience of the COVID-19 pandemic seems to further highlight the bond-forming role of culture and institutions that help shape it. In his Message for the International Day of Persons with Disabilities issued at the end of 2020, Pope Francis – as if in opposition to the culture of rejection – recognises the importance of cultural inclusion and the promotion of attitudes based on solidarity and willingness to help

1 S. Czarnowski, *Kultura* [Culture], Kraków 2019, p. 12.

people with disabilities: ‘The present pandemic has further highlighted the disparities and inequalities widespread in our time, particularly to the detriment of the most vulnerable. [...] For this reason, *inclusion* should be the first “rock” on which to build our house. [...] Inclusion should be the “rock” on which to build programmes and initiatives of civil institutions meant to ensure that no one, especially those in greatest difficulty, is left behind’.²

The concern of the state, its agencies, and entities supported by it to ensure citizens universal and equal access to various areas of social life, including culture, has been in recent years reflected in a variety of programmes and legislative documents translating into real activities of offices, institutions, companies, and individuals. For example, the Government Programme ‘Accessibility Plus 2018–2025’, developed together with the community of people with disabilities, contains a framework action plan intended to improve the accessibility of public spaces and services. In February 2021, the Strategy for Persons with Disabilities 2021–2030 was adopted as part of Poland’s commitment to implement the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which aims to integrate people with various types of disabilities in social and professional life, while taking into account their needs in terms of independent living.

Legal guarantees of accessibility have been enshrined in the Act on ensuring accessibility for people with special needs³ and the Act on the digital accessibility of websites and mobile applications of public entities.⁴ While the relevant challenges had been recognised and addressed before, with the entry into force of both acts the moral obligation acknowledged by many people in the Polish cultural community was given a formal character. Currently, Polish public institutions are investing a lot of effort to

2 Pope Francis, Message of the Holy Father Francis for the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, 3 December 2020. Cf. https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/pont-messages/2020/documents/papa-francesco_20201203_messaggio-disabilita.html [accessed: 19 August 2021].

3 Act of 19 July 2019 on ensuring accessibility for people with special needs (Journal of Laws of 2019, item 1696).

4 Act of 4 April 2019 on the digital accessibility of websites and mobile applications of public entities (Journal of Laws of 2019, item 848).

meet the accessibility requirements in three areas: architectural, digital, and information and communication.

For years, the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage has implemented activities aimed at removing barriers in access to cultural resources, events for people with disabilities, and active participation in the creation of culture. An important example is the *Kultura Dostępna* ('Accessible Culture') programme, which seeks to enable the participation in the cultural offer of various social groups who are otherwise excluded or whose access to cultural and social life is significantly limited. Another example is the National Reading Development Programme, which contributes to the popularisation of reading among people with visual disabilities. Among the projects supported by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage are cultural events and educational activities addressed to specific groups of users with disabilities, as well as activities aimed at improving the accessibility of cultural institutions. Launched in mid-2021 and funded by the European Union, the 'Culture Without Barriers' project seeks to develop a model for ensuring accessibility in culture which will additionally help cultural institutions adapt their offer to the needs of diverse audiences.

Activities ensuring the accessibility of culture are also initiated by the National Centre for Culture, the publisher of this Yearbook. The accessibility policy is implemented through internal and external training courses addressed to employees of local-government cultural institutions and culture animators, cultural events held in compliance with the applicable requirements, and the introduction of accessibility requirements in grant programmes supporting the activities of local-government cultural institutions and non-governmental organisations. At the end of 2020, the Centre developed its internal accessibility strategy defining work standards to ensure the accessibility of projects and undertakings implemented by the Centre.

The Polish Culture Yearbook 2021 seeks to assess the condition of Polish culture from the perspective of actions taken to increase accessibility in three areas regulated by the Act on ensuring accessibility for people with special needs. The respective texts present the activities and the funding allocated for this purpose, discussing how the pillars of accessible culture are being developed in Polish cultural institutions and the public media. The prism of accessibility has been applied to identify areas where culture proved to be a mechanism that prevented exclusion. Many articles

also discuss a new context of accessibility that has emerged, more or less directly, due to the restrictions and challenges related to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The publication presents both statistical data and valuable case studies.

The sixth edition of the Yearbook published by the National Centre for Culture is a compendium of accessibility in Polish culture. It is my sincere hope that the articles compiled in this issue will allow our readers to see how Polish culture is becoming an ‘ambassador’ for accessibility.

Prof. Piotr Gliński

Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Culture and National Heritage

ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ACCESSIBLE CULTURE

Director of the National Centre for Culture Poland

In the book edited by Lawrence E. Harrison and Samuel P. Huntington, *Culture Matters*, one of the chapters opens with the already famous statement by David Landes: 'Max Weber was right. If we learn anything from the history of economic development, it is that culture makes almost all the difference'.¹ Illustrating these words, Landes makes references both to Weber's classical thought and more current studies of socio-economic changes in Argentina and Japan. The general message of the studies presented in this volume seems to be quite consistent: culture means so much more than what we first think of upon hearing the term. It is not only about theatres, paintings, and even the greatest music, but also, if not above all, about elements less perceptible at first glance such as language, values, beliefs, and bonds. There is a good reason why Pierre Bourdieu attributed such an important role to cultural capital, which, according to Gisèle Sapiro, 'is all the more effective given that, unlike economic wealth, it is misrecognized as such and thus recognized as legiti-

1 D. Landes, *Kultura przesądza prawie o wszystkim* [original title: *Culture Makes Almost All the Difference*], [in:] L.E. Harrison, S.P. Huntington (Eds), *Kultura ma znaczenie* [original title: *Culture Matters*], Poznań 2000, p. 42.

mate, which generates its symbolic value.² As Wendy Griswold, ever so accurately, observes, ‘the sociological analysis of culture begins at the premise that culture provides orientation, wards off chaos, and directs behaviour toward certain lines of action and away from others’.³ Culture is what makes us recognise our place in the world and perceive the world in a specific way. As a result, it is all the more important that access to culture and the opportunity to participate in it and benefit from it be as egalitarian as possible.

Participation in culture can be conditioned both internally and externally.⁴ The said cultural capital, despite its seemingly internal focus, in practice resides at the intersection of both dimensions.⁵ When exploring the accessibility of culture, the external conditions of participation, ‘inherent in the socio-professional and material characteristics of individuals as well as in their life context’⁶, emerge as equally interesting and certainly much easier to notice. One of them is the broadly defined cultural policy, implemented at both the central and local levels, as a factor that shapes the network and infrastructure of cultural institutions along with the accessibility of activities they offer. In recent years, Poland has made considerable progress in ensuring access for people with special needs to all areas of life, both in terms of individual and collective activities. The entry into force of the Act of 19 July 2019⁷ regulating these issues was, on the one hand, a consequence of the changes taking place in the Polish socio-institutional space for years, and on the other, a sign of new perspectives for an even more complete adaptation of public space to society’s growing needs and expectations.

- 2 G. Sapiro, *Bourdieu’s Sociology of Culture: On the Economy of Symbolic Goods*, [in:] *The SAGE Handbook of Cultural Sociology*, D. Inglis, A.-M. Almila (Eds), Los Angeles [et al.] 2016, p. 94.
- 3 W. Griswold, *Socjologia kultury. Kultury i społeczeństwa w zmieniającym się świecie* [original title: *Cultures and Societies in a Changing World*], transl. into Polish by P. Tomanek, Warsaw 2013, p. 54.
- 4 See: M. Golka, *Socjologia kultury* [Sociology of Culture], Warsaw 2013.
- 5 See for example: O. Lizardo, *Culture and stratification*, [in:] *Handbook of Cultural Sociology*, J.R. Hall, L. Grindstaff, M.-Ch. Lo (Eds), New York 2012.
- 6 M. Golka, *Socjologia kultury*, op. cit., p. 162.
- 7 Act of 19 July 2019 on ensuring accessibility for people with special needs (Journal of Laws of 2019, item 1696).

Recently, the metaphor of ‘en/lighting’ [in Polish: *d/oświeclanie*] has been close to my heart. I believe it can be applied to the mission and activities of many cultural institutions in Poland, not only those managed by the state. It refers to different contexts and new ways of exploring the world through culture and with culture, or, in other words, shaping and strengthening cultural capital among the users of cultural activities. Together with our team at the National Centre for Culture, we are making every effort to be viewed as an ambassador for the ‘en/lighting’ process. We are consistent in doing our best to be as generally accessible as possible, which you can learn more about from one of the first texts in this year’s Polish Culture Yearbook.

It is a special edition that seeks to give the current picture of the adaptation of Polish cultural institutions, not only including the perspective of people with disabilities, but also, more broadly, that of people with various special needs. As Prof. Piotr Gliński observes in the Introduction, while actions intended to improve accessibility were implemented before, since the entry into force of the Act of 2019, Polish cultural institutions have intensified their efforts to meet the accessibility requirements in multiple dimensions, including architecture, digital access, information and communication. The articles compiled in the Polish Culture Yearbook 2021 seek to present the effects of these efforts. At this point, two issues must be emphasised. First, the process of adaptation to the accessibility requirements is still ongoing. As a result, the presented texts essentially outline a certain moment in time of the work in progress. Second, one must bear in mind the implications of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic⁸, with some of them described in the articles below. The pandemic might have forced many institutions to increase their efforts and make their cultural offer available online, but it has also significantly affected their day-to-day operations.

The Polish Culture Yearbook 2021 consists of five parts. The first contains articles by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage and the Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy, which provide insight into certain aspects of Poland’s cultural policy regarding accessibility. The second section offers texts prepared by the National Centre for Culture,

8 Although the COVID-19 pandemic began in March 2020, special sanitary restrictions applied practically throughout the entire year of 2021.

including an accessibility analysis of the Centre's activities. The third and most elaborate part of our publication focuses on solutions and good practices in terms of accessibility introduced by selected cultural institutions in Poland (e.g. the National Library of Poland, The State Archives Head Office, the Statistical Office in Kraków). The next part also deserves particular attention as it presents materials prepared by institutions operating in the area of the broadly defined media. Traditionally, the Yearbook closes with the 'Varia' chapter.

I would like to thank the authors of all articles in the Polish Culture Yearbook 2021. With this publication, I hope to inspire our readers to reflect – both while reading and afterwards – on the role and meaning of culture, also in the context of its accessibility.

I trust you will find this year's edition an enjoyable read.

Prof. Rafał Wiśniewski

Director of the National Centre for Culture Poland

1.



POLISH CULTURAL POLICY – TOWARDS ACCESSIBILITY

THE ‘CULTURE WITHOUT BARRIERS’ PROJECT¹ – A NEW APPROACH TO THE ACCESSIBILITY OF CULTURE

Department of Media and Creative Sectors,
Ministry of Culture and National Heritage

Experiencing culture and active participation in creating culture are among the most important human needs. While offering pleasure and entertainment, the fulfilment of these needs is primarily a fundamental form of participation in community life, a key component in the construction of human identity, and a path to personal development. Therefore, it is our shared responsibility, albeit also a great challenge, to ensure that cultural resources and events are available to all people. Regrettably, access to culture remains largely limited for certain social groups. People with special needs, including people with disabilities, are frequently unable to attend cultural events. The Act on ensuring accessibility for people with special needs defines persons with special needs as:

persons who, due to their external or internal features, or because of the circumstances in which they have found themselves, must take additional action or additional measures to overcome barriers in order to participate in various spheres of life on an equal basis with other people.²

- 1 The project is financed by the European Union (EU) under the Operational Programme Knowledge Education Development 2014–2020.
- 2 Art. 2, section 3 of the Act of 19 July 2019 on ensuring accessibility for people with special needs, Journal of Laws of 2019, item 1696, Online Database of Polish Legislation (in Polish: *Internetowy System Aktów Prawnych*, ISAP),

Actions to eliminate barriers that prevent people with special needs from fully participating in various aspects of everyday life have been taken for years – for example, as part of the ‘Accessibility Plus’ government programme and the Strategy for Persons with Disabilities adopted by the Council of Ministers in February 2021. Also grant competitions announced annually by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage include accessibility criteria regarding the effects of the tasks that receive funding. The National Reading Development Programme and the IBUK Libra Light platform promote reading among people with visual impairments. To improve access to films, legislative changes are being proposed which oblige providers of video-on-demand (VOD) services to include in their VOD catalogue at least 30% of productions with accommodations for people with disabilities.

WHAT IS ACCESSIBILITY IN CULTURE?

When thinking about the accessibility of the offer of cultural institutions, we tend to focus primarily on architectural barriers. However, soft actions are just as important to ensure that all users feel equally invited to participate in culture. Many technical and organisational solutions have been developed to allow people with disabilities to experience culture and art – such as audio description, Polish Sign Language (PJM) interpretations, typhlographics, 3D models, descriptions in simplified language, and the adoption of universal design in cultural institutions. However, no accommodation can serve its purpose if the users to whom it is addressed are unaware of its existence. The respective groups of users must be reached and accordingly informed about events originally designed with different needs in mind to ensure that everyone can benefit from the offer of a given cultural institution. Organisers of cultural events and cultural workers face a challenge as they might need to improve their competences to be able to offer professional services to visitors with disabilities, ensuring their comfort and reception of culture and art at the highest possible level. Such a multi-faceted and holistic approach to the accessibility of culture is at the centre of a new project implemented by the State Fund

<https://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU20190001696>
[accessed: 26 July 2021].

for the Rehabilitation of Disabled People (in Polish: *Państwowy Fundusz Rehabilitacji Osób Niepełnosprawnych*, PFRON), the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, the Culture Without Barriers Foundation, and the Kompetenzzentrum für Kulturelle Bildung im Alter und Inklusion³ since May 2021.

THE ‘CULTURE WITHOUT BARRIERS’ PROJECT

The ‘Culture Without Barriers’ project is financed by the European Union (EU) under the Operational Programme Knowledge Education Development 2014–2020. Its budget is PLN 25 119 600, including PLN 23 685 270.84 from the European Social Fund. As part of the project, a model for ensuring accessibility in culture will be developed and 100 cultural institutions from all over Poland, selected in a competition, will be awarded grants for the implementation of cultural events accessible to people with special needs as well as the testing of the model. The institutions will receive nearly PLN 20 million in total for this purpose. The programme funds can be used for activities and solutions enabling wider access to the cultural offer for people with disabilities such as the organisation of educational workshops, the preparation of special sightseeing paths, audio descriptions of sites and performances, the presence of guides fluent in the PJM, typhlographics, 3D models, object descriptions in simplified language, and the adoption of universal design in cultural institutions (excluding architectural accessibility). A number of cultural institutions already have the necessary resources to help people with disabilities benefit from their offer without hindrance. However, the prevalence of such solutions, particularly in smaller towns and institutions, is still insufficient. The grant competition regulations will be prepared in cooperation with cultural accessibility experts. The call for grant applications is scheduled for early 2022.

- 3 The Centre of Competence for Creative Ageing and Inclusive Arts was established by the Minister of Culture of North Rhine-Westphalia in 2008. Its aim is to develop tools and support cultural institutions in the process of adapting space and forms of activity to the key challenge faced by inclusive societies – ensuring that everyone can participate in social and cultural life, regardless of their hearing, vision, cognition, and mobility needs.

Beneficiaries of the grant competition will carry out projects whose planning and implementation will require the inclusion of the representatives of organisations associating people with disabilities and local communities. As a result, the projects will not only respond to their real needs but will also contribute to the development of cooperation schemes and networks for the future. In addition, they will also enhance the competences of the employees of cultural institutions and raise their awareness of the needs of people with disabilities.

THE ACCESSIBILITY OF CULTURE AS A PROCESS

A permanent effect of the 'Culture Without Barriers' project will be the model of organising cultural events in a way that makes them accessible to the widest possible audience. This model will be ready to be implemented in Polish libraries, community centres, theatres, art galleries, museums, and other cultural institutions – including those that will not participate in the programme. The key aspect on which the model will be based is the user journey – from the information about the cultural institution's offer posted on the website or on social media to ticket purchase and arriving at the institution to participating in the event in a safe and comfortable manner, to the fullest extent possible. If any one of these links is ignored or fails to function properly, the access of users with special needs to culture becomes difficult, if not impossible. The aim of the 'Culture Without Barriers' project is to show that the accessibility of the cultural offer can be improved significantly, in many cases at a relatively low effort and cost. Representatives of both grant recipients and institutions implementing the model in the future will have to assess whether a person with special needs has equal opportunities to access their offer:

- Does the information about the offer reach people with special needs? Is the way and form of communication adjusted to people with special needs? Is the information about possible barriers and dedicated solutions included?
- Can users with special needs reach the venue where the cultural event is held? How can their journey be described and facilitated?
- To what extent can a person with special needs move freely and independently in the space where the cultural event is held?
- How accessible is the event itself? How to eliminate barriers that prevent full participation in the event?

Once they know the answers to these questions, cultural institutions will be able to prepare a truly accessible cultural offer. It is extremely important to include people with special needs in these processes to ensure that the identification of barriers and the proposed improvements are as adequate and effective as possible.

THE ‘CULTURE WITHOUT BARRIERS’ PROJECT

- Implemented by PFRON (project leader), the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage (strategic partner at the national level), the Culture Without Barriers Foundation (non-governmental partner at the national level), Kompetenzzentrum für Kulturelle Bildung im Alter und Inklusion (transnational partner).
- Implementation period: 2021–2023.
- The aim of the project is to improve accessibility to the offer of Polish cultural institutions for people with disabilities.
- Budget: PLN 25 119 600, including PLN 23 685 270.84 from the European Social Fund.
- As part of the project, 100 grants will be awarded to cultural institutions from all over Poland for a total amount of nearly PLN 20 million. The call for grant applications is scheduled for early 2022.
- The planning and implementation of the tasks by the project beneficiaries will require the inclusion of the representatives of organisations associating people with disabilities and local communities.
- As part of the project, a model for ensuring the accessibility of cultural events will be developed with the participation of all stakeholders (organisations associating people with disabilities, local communities, representatives of cultural institutions) – for universal implementation in the future.

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ACCESSIBILITY IN STATE CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS – SELECTED EXAMPLES

Department of National Cultural Institutions,
Ministry of Culture and National Heritage

The Act on ensuring accessibility for people with special needs (hereinafter: the Accessibility Act), in force since 2019, introduced legal obligations for providers of cultural activities. As a result, cultural institutions became the primary entities responsible for ensuring access to culture for people specified in the Act. Institutions provide access to culture to people with special needs not only by adapting or remodelling their buildings, but especially through activities undertaken in terms of digital accessibility.

This text focuses on two state cultural institutions whose programmes and activities reflect their commitment to improving accessibility: Zachęta – National Gallery of Art, which has successfully implemented projects for years to ensure greater accessibility of art exhibitions, including the digitisation of contemporary art collections in Poland as part of the ‘Open Zachęta’ project; and Polish Music Publishing (hereinafter: PWM Edition), which collects and preserves Polish and international musical heritage, making it available in digital form on the website ‘Polska Biblioteka Muzyczna’ (Polish Music Library).

Accessibility is largely inspiring further discussions about the necessary changes, with cultural institutions as its ambassadors, which shows that culture can play an increasingly important role as a tool in preventing exclusion.

ZACHĘTA – NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

Zachęta – National Gallery of Art effectively implements the accessibility programme as its statutory obligation in the area of the promotion of contemporary art. It has focused on the identification of barriers in access to culture and the needs of diverse audiences for years, long before the establishment of the position of accessibility coordinator in 2012. As part of the 'Open Zachęta' programme, launched in 2011, the Gallery began the gradual digitisation of resources made available under open-source licences and the implementation of accessibility standards for users specified in the Accessibility Act.

In 2011, Zachęta commenced the reconstruction of its building. The consent of the inspector of monuments was obtained to build an external lift shaft. Many other solutions were introduced such as pictogram systems, induction loops, voice signalling, and Braille markings in the lifts. Zachęta's staff were trained, for example, in anti-discrimination, first contact, audio description, and the basics of Polish Sign Language (PJM). In 2012, the nationwide conference 'Making spatial artworks available through touch' was held in Zachęta. Organised in cooperation with the National Institute for Museums and Public Collections (NIMOZ), it was attended by curators and conservators. The resulting knowledge base has since then been used to prepare educational programmes and cycles addressed to specific groups of users, e.g. 'Accessible Art' dedicated to the blind and people with visual impairments, and workshops for families with children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Zachęta has also gradually raised the awareness of the needs of people who are hard of hearing by offering PJM interpretations and, since 2015, by holding regular meetings in PJM and with spoken language interpretation, which currently constitute two important educational cycles, *Zachęta miga!* (Zachęta Signs!) and *Zachęta miga rodzinie!* (Zachęta Signs for Families!), conducted by an employee who is deaf. It was also in Zachęta that the concept was born and the first entries were developed for the *Encyclopaedia of Art in Polish Sign Language*, a project implemented for several years and funded by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage. The year 2020 proved to be a challenging time also for culture. As a pioneer and pillar of cultural accessibility in Poland, Zachęta faced new challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The institution was forced to focus virtually all

its activities on digital accessibility. Presently, Zachęta's visitors include both users who prefer culture in the digital form and those who want to experience art through traditional channels – through live meetings, tours, and workshops.

Zachęta could see how important it was to create an accessibility team led by a coordinator when it joined one of Poland's largest projects of contemporary art digitisation and sharing. Between 2020 and 2023, as part of its policy of openness and accessibility, the Gallery is implementing the 'Open Zachęta' project funded from the Operational Programme Digital Poland.¹ It includes the digitisation of over 2 500 objects from Zachęta's collections and documentation resources. All items will be made available under free licences in compliance with all accessibility standards and requirements. To this end, an accessibility team was established whose four members are focused exclusively on the implementation of accessibility regulations.

After a year of intensive online activities, seeking to meet the accessibility requirements, the Gallery continues its strategy to follow, first and foremost, user expectations. In addition to the tasks resulting from the Accessibility Act, it focuses on services and projects corresponding to the needs of those interested, improving their knowledge and cultural competences, and simply giving them joy and pleasure.

In 2020 and in the first half of 2021, Zachęta held a total of 35 events conducted in PJM by native signers, 11 events with PJM interpretation, 14 video recordings in PJM (with Polish subtitles), and 12 meetings with live audio description. In addition, 16 audio descriptions were recorded for exhibitions and works, and five workshops were held for children with ASD. Some of the events took place online.

The focus of the workshops and a symposium (prepared in March 2020) on the exchange of experiences in the implementation of legal re-

1 'Open Zachęta' is a project focused on the digitisation of and ensuring access to Polish contemporary art in Zachęta – National Gallery of Art, as well as the development of IT tools, staff competences, cultural animation and the promotion of digital cultural resources for educational, research and creative purposes. Beneficiary: Zachęta – National Gallery of Art; partners: Centrum Cyfrowe, Society for the Encouragement of Fine Arts. More information available at: <https://zacheta.art.pl/pl/popc> [accessed: 1 August 2021].

quirements was directed to persons identified in the Accessibility Act. Eventually, instead of the planned workshops and symposium, the ‘Europe Beyond Access’ competition was organised in cooperation with the British Council (28 January–29 March 2021). The works were evaluated by a jury composed of both Polish and British members. The aim was to take a closer look at artistic projects otherwise largely absent from the official and mainstream art community and to recognise systemic barriers. Works were submitted by 82 artists: people who see themselves as artists with disabilities, as well as those who contest or reject this identity and emphasise, for example, their belonging to the Deaf Culture. The level of the competition was so high that, in addition to three equivalent cash prizes, the jury decided to award three distinctions. Importantly, the competition contributed to a discussion about identity and values that result from openness to diversity and otherness.

Another reason for the discussion about the social perception of identity and equality was the exhibition organised by Daniel Kotowski, a deaf curator, artist and performer, as part of the series ‘Live Magazines: Socially appropriate, statistically average, scientifically healthy, personally desirable...’ (12 June–22 August 2021), inspired, among others, by Rosemarie Garland-Thomson’s *Staring: How We Look*, published in Poland by the Teatr 21 Foundation (with Zachęta as a partner of the publication). The issues of identity and social perception addressed in the competition and exhibition will also be continued in the programme prepared by Zachęta as part of the Culture Without Barriers Festival in autumn 2021 (Zachęta has participated in the festival since its launch in 2013).

POLISH MUSIC LIBRARY BY PWM EDITION

Founded in 1945, PWM Edition is not only a central institution in Polish culture, but also one of the most distinguished music publishing houses in the world. Its activity, spanning the continuous period of 76 years, has allowed it to collect unique resources documenting not only Polish musical heritage. PWM Edition’s collections include nearly 270 000 items, including first editions, autographs, music manuscripts, sheet music, books, journals, iconographic, sound and audio-video items, as well as

internationally unique orchestral material (scores, orchestral and choir parts, piano reductions, librettos). Some of PWM's resources are deposited in Polish libraries and archives, while the publishing house itself acts as a safeguard of sheet music entrusted to it by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage and the Polish Composers' Union, including the works of: Fryderyk Chopin, Mieczysław Karłowicz, Stanisław Moniuszko, Ignacy Jan Paderewski, Karol Szymanowski, Henryk Wieniawski; 20th-century artists such as Grażyna Bacewicz, Henryk Mikołaj Górecki, Wojciech Kilar, Witold Lutosławski; and renowned contemporary composers such as Eugeniusz Knapik, Zygmunt Krauze, Andrzej Krzanowski, Hanna Kulenty, Aleksander Lasoń, Paweł Mykietyn, Aleksander Nowak, Marta Ptaszyńska, Elżbieta Sikora, and Agata Zubel.

PWM Edition's statutory duty is not only to collect and preserve but, first and foremost, to disseminate Polish and international musical heritage in Poland and abroad through publishing, loaning, education, and the promotion of cultural heritage. Therefore, it is one of the publisher's strategic goals to digitise its resources and make them available in electronic form, inasmuch as the digitisation projects of cultural objects conducted by cultural institutions thus far did not include the professional digitisation of sheet music intended for orchestral performances.

PWM Edition's objectives related to the protection of the value of objects, creating digital copies, increasing access to resources for institutions, educational entities and people interested in culture (including those with disabilities), and the promotion of Polish music in Poland and abroad (with items described and shared in three languages: Polish, English and German) are funded from the Operational Programme Digital Poland, with the support of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, as part of two projects: 'Digitisation of resources safeguarded by PWM Edition' (in 2017–2021, a total of 12 646 items were digitised, with 10 720 of them made available) and 'Digitisation of resources safeguarded by PWM Edition – continued' (in 2021–2023, a total of 13 300 items are to be digitised, with 8 850 of them to be made available).

Given PWM Edition's mission to make its collections available in digital form, a professional digitisation laboratory was established which features cutting-edge technology and equipment for the digitisation of the stored items, including scanning devices and software with templates for the

objective assessment and verification of the quality of reproduction systems. A unique model for the digital protection, preservation and verification of sheet music has been developed in which it is possible to enhance, both technically and content-wise, the quality of the data. A specialised database for item storing has been designed and compiled along with a unified model for metadata processing and the description and edition of informational content, which will facilitate a more effective identification of and search for resources. Public sector information has been made available in compliance with the applicable standards (WCAG 2.1). Moreover, the IT infrastructure continues to be expanded to include new server units, data security systems, and additional platform components for sharing online resources.

In parallel, the website Polish Music Library (www.polskabiblioteka-muzyczna.pl, www.polishmusiclibrary.pl) is emerging as the principal tool for the presentation of digitised resources. Currently, it offers over 11 000 items including copyrighted content as a particularly unique treat for users. Three levels of access to the resources allow users to study sheet music, text and iconographic material in different quality – from low to high resolution, in excerpts or in full, for online use or for download (depending on the legal status of the item). By 2023, in addition to the already available content, as many as 5 000 entries of the iconic twelve-volume *PWM Edition Musical Encyclopaedia* will have undergone digitisation and edition (updating). The website is also to offer a module with educational material for children. It is expected that within a few years, the search engine of the Polish Music Library will allow users to explore as many of PWM Edition's resources as possible, which will also include – apart from sheet music, text and iconographic material – audio and video files, as well as the archives of *Ruch Muzyczny*, Poland's oldest (published since 1945) periodical dedicated to music. The modernised website will feature an interoperable mechanism (API) enabling access to PWM Edition's resources – presenting Polish music from all periods – from all over the world.

In the meantime, users are more than welcome to visit the Polish Music Library and publicly available streaming services (e.g. YouTube, Spotify, Tidal, Apple Music) offering hundreds of audio and audio-visual productions, concerts, music albums, films and stage performances, abundant educational material (e.g. a free application called *con.sol.la*) dedicated to

children, adolescents and adults, as well as articles of the biweekly *Ruch Muzyczny* (www.ruchmuzyczny.pl). Young musicians can use con.sol.la's free music trainer, while those more advanced can visit nKoda, a service with over 1 000 works of music from PWM Edition's resources.

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FIXING THE WORLD – THE IDEA OF ACCESSIBILITY IN THE CULTURAL SECTOR

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Disabled people aren't inherently defective, but rather (...) non-disabled people have failed at creating a physical world that serves all.¹

Reni Eddo-Lodge

The words of the British journalist and writer Reni Eddo-Lodge describe the essence of accessibility in unambiguous and easily understood terms. Firstly, the author addresses the non-disabled and at times inattentive constructors of things, and secondly, she points to a significant flaw in mis-designed reality – the lack of universal usability.

'Usability' has become the subject of a variety of accessibility measures aimed at eliminating or partially correcting the shortcomings. As a result, accessibility is an endless process of designing, improving and fixing the space, both literally (directly) and metaphorically as a space of intellectual, emotional, personal, professional activity, etc. All these efforts are to make our living together simpler and more enjoyable. People with disabilities or, more broadly, people with special needs, in accordance

1 <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/9243555-it-feminism-needs-to-recognise-that-disabled-people-aren-t-inherently> [accessed: 19 July 2021].

with the Act on ensuring accessibility for people with special needs (hereinafter: the Accessibility Act)², are not a nameless group, but individuals with their own histories, ambitions, dreams, and plans. When thinking about accessibility, it is worth changing the perspective from the holistic to the individual or personal one, if only for a moment. It allows us to see a concrete and real person for whom we want to repair a certain part of the existing world. This is the space we want to make accessible to its rightful users. We should never forget that the accessibility process is one of changes that also concern us: regardless of our current condition, we all share the prospect of becoming seniors one day and facing the natural limitations at that stage of life. Therefore, accessibility should be a social and personal need we are all aware of, so that we can protect ourselves from isolation and reduced quality of life, paying attention to our loved ones and other life companions, even if met only for a brief moment.

Given the subject matter of this publication and the limited space in this text, let us not dwell on definitions. They are abundant and concern our understanding of both accessibility and disability or special needs. Like other definitions, they are hardly capable of capturing reality in its entirety. As such, they are merely an attempt to build a framework that facilitates its comprehension – at times by narrowing down, at others by broadening the described concepts.

For the purposes of this article, I would like to adopt the terminology of ‘Accessibility Plus’. This programme is a significant step towards making changes for improved accessibility in Poland in many important fields of life such as architecture, education, transport, health, etc.

The scope of the programme is wide and covers many aspects of life – also broadly defined culture. It is this part of ‘Accessibility Plus’ that is the subject of my reflections. I also focus on a new publication – a guide addressed to cultural institutions, initiated by the Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage and prepared by the Culture Without Barriers Foundation in Warsaw.

2 Act of 19 July 2019 on ensuring accessibility for people with special needs, Journal of Laws of 2020, item 1062, <https://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/download.xsp/WDU20190001696/U/D20191696Lj.pdf> [accessed: 3 August 2021].

LEGAL REGULATIONS: A BRIEF REVIEW

It is evident that the way of life of people with disabilities is changing in many parts of the world. Public and social organisations invest a lot of effort to show disability in a positive way, in accordance with the belief that it 'is neither an addiction nor a disease but a fact strictly connected to the environment, culture and prejudice'. It is true that 'in fact, under the right conditions, people with disabilities study, work, play one or more sports, go on holiday, enjoy a social life, start their own family'. Disability is not an isolated incident; it affects millions of people and, as already mentioned, it can affect anyone at any time in life.³

No matter which part of the globe they live in, people with disabilities are, first and foremost, limited by the organisation of public space and social culture and its frequently insufficient space for empathy, the rejection of negative stereotypes and (other than incidental) assistance.

Seeking to accelerate the process of change, Poland adopted the Charter of Rights of Persons with Disabilities as early as in the 1990s. In general terms, as a resolution of the Sejm (the lower chamber of Parliament), it obliges public sector bodies to make public services available to the said social group. Despite the Charter, little changed over the years: old problems were still neither fully comprehended nor effectively resolved. The process of change continued to bypass cultural institutions, largely focused on changing their paradigm of action rather than on accessibility, as we call it today. Another significant step towards positive change was the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ratified by Poland in 2012. To this day, the Convention remains one of the most important legal acts and, next to the Accessibility Act, the document most frequently referred to in this context in Poland. The Convention provided an impulse for the Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, finally signed in 2021, and before that, in 2018, it inspired the development of the 'Accessibility Plus' programme (see below).

3 Quotations from: Federazione Italiana per il Superamento dell'Handicap. Transl. from Italian to Polish by A. Wotlińska and from Polish to English by M. Sobczak, <https://www.superando.it/2016/04/08/cosi-si-cambia-la-cultura-sulla-disabilita/> [accessed: 29 June 2021].

Currently, the most discussed document of the greatest impact in Poland is the Accessibility Act. Adopted in July 2019, it establishes the Accessibility Board and the Accessibility Fund and defines the catalogue of services obligatory in central and local administrative bodies, and in public and non-public institutions, while strengthening the 'Accessibility Plus' programme – the predecessor of the Act.

ACCESSIBILITY PLUS 2018–2025⁴

The idea of the programme originated from the Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy. However, given its wide scope and intended intervention in key areas for the quality of life of people with special needs, the community of non-governmental (NGO) and public organisations was involved in its development. It was to become a significant step in Poland's development. Following the intention of the authors, the programme was based on three premises: (1) the principle of subsidiarity of the state with respect to all social groups; (2) sustainable development, which also guarantees harmonious economic growth; and (3) the view of reality, which has always evolved under the sheer force of social processes. These include, on the one hand, the progressive ageing of the population and the intensification of civilisation diseases and, on the other, increasing life expectancy. These factors continue to affect the demographic structure and size of society whose members, if they are to function well, require solutions that adapt public space to their specific needs.

According to the programme, public space must become as accessible as possible, regardless of the intellectual, psychophysical and sensory abilities of potential users. For this to happen, it is necessary to make people realise and always remember that public space belongs to all citizens and as such should be shaped through their active participation. Therefore, one of the key points of 'Accessibility Plus' is the participation of people with special needs in the creation and remodelling of public space. They should be the key evaluators of changes and projects.

4 All quotations and paraphrases come from: Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy, *Governmental Programme 'Accessibility Plus 2018–2025'*, July 2018, <https://www.funduszeuropejskie.gov.pl/strony/o-funduszach/fundusze-europejskie-bez-barier/dostepnosc-plus/o-programie/> [accessed: 4 August 2021].

The programme document states that ‘accessibility is an environmental characteristic (physical space, digital reality, information and communication systems, products, services) which allows persons with functional difficulties (physical, cognitive) to benefit from it on an equal basis with others’. Said ‘equality’ is a condition for independent and effective living as well as participation in social and economic processes. Its sources lie in universal design, the removal of as many barriers as possible, the use of compensatory and assistive technologies, and raising awareness and empathy for the special needs of potential users of public space. The programme, and the general idea of accessibility it promotes, does not only apply to people with disabilities, both visible and invisible, but also to seniors, people who are weaker due to illness, and people with small children or heavy luggage. Their special predicament may therefore be of both permanent and temporary character.

ACCESSIBILITY IN CULTURE

The process of accessibility or making something accessible concerns a myriad of broadly defined social services, whereby access to culture is among the top priorities due to its significant effect on the quality of life, satisfaction with life, self-fulfilment, and harmonious psycho-emotional development. Participation in cultural activities has a great impact on human well-being; not only does it reduce fatigue and help us relax, but it also gives us aesthetic pleasure.⁵ Participants in cultural activities can develop their personality and imagination by experiencing the artistic matter that makes them move beyond time and space, allowing them to see the world in different dimensions.⁶

The problem of accessibility was noticed in the cultural sector as early as in the 1990s. The authors of the Interministerial Programme of Cultural Education made it one of its challenges to increase the cultural participation of people with disabilities. Although the need itself was realised all

5 M. Makówka, *Funkcje uczestnictwa w kulturze* [Functions of participation in culture], *Zeszyty Naukowe Akademii Ekonomicznej w Krakowie* 2007, No. 742, p. 7.

6 *Ibid.*, p. 10.

those years ago, its translation into reality in culture still requires a lot of effort.⁷

The social function of art is extremely broad and does not stop at therapeutic usability. Irrespective of physical, sensory and intellectual abilities, it stimulates imagination and emotions, gives pleasure, and contributes to community building. Art that is open to users' needs often helps overcome obstacles in life. Access to cultural services, including educational ones, allows us to shift our thinking and enter other registers, often liberating us from long-established patterns. Contrary to popular belief, such creativity is an egalitarian feature rather than an elite one, as observed by the first of its Polish researchers, Edward Nęcka, in the 1990s.⁸ It concerns every human being, although its intensity might vary. The development of creative potential and its externalisation is an obvious part of the idea of accessibility. The participation of people with special needs in cultural services – the best space to stimulate creativity and break down barriers – is crucial in this regard. No arguments can be found for limiting people's participation in this sphere – be it due to age or physical or intellectual potential.

The cultural sector, next to communication and construction, has therefore become one of those where 'Accessibility Plus' is intended to drive the necessary changes. Cultural entities, particularly local government and state-managed cultural institutions, have been among those that continue to work on architectural and programme-related changes, in which they have been supported by NGOs, experts, and specialised public institutions.

Activity no. 25, 'Culture Without Barriers', contains a catalogue of programme interventions to be implemented in the sector of cultural services. On the one hand, they include architectural changes; on the other,

7 A. Wotlińska, *Przestrzeń różnorodności. Edukacja kulturalna w wybranych ministerialnych koncepcjach programowych po roku 1989* [Space of diversity. Cultural education in selected ministerial programme concepts after 1989], [in:] *Potencjał dobrego sąsiedztwa. Edukacja kulturalna w Polsce i w Niemczech* [The potential of a good neighbourhood. Cultural education in Poland and Germany], Warsaw 2019, p. 111.

8 E. Nęcka, *Psychologia twórczości* [Psychology of creativity], Sopot 2003, p. 19.

they focus on the content and accessibility of the cultural offer, with logistical and informational activities also playing an important part.

The former – infrastructural – component involves the modernisation of the buildings of cultural entities in compliance with the accessibility standards already developed in connection with European Union (EU) funds.⁹ It also covers the purchase of equipment and tools necessary to enable people with special needs to fully participate in events (e.g. induction loops, lifts, audio description devices).

The accessibility of historical buildings is crucial for improving access to cultural services. The problem that arises in this case relates to the need to preserve the historic substance and comply with conservation guidelines. The ‘alternative access’ provision of the Accessibility Act¹⁰, which comes into force on 6 September 2021, does not mean that physical access must be provided at all costs and on a full scale. The community of people with special needs, as well as those who work for it, are not demanding the complete reconstruction of historical monuments, but are interested in making them accessible to the extent or the methods that are adequate to the historical status of the site. Consequently, the motivation behind the amended provision was to ensure effective access not only through the physical alteration of the building’s structure but also, for example, through the use of new technologies (e.g. Virtual Reality). The most important aspect is the positive perception of the accessibility process, going beyond schematic thinking. The idea is to inspire motivation in conservators and owners of historical monuments to make these unique elements of cultural heritage part of the aesthetic and educational experience also of people with special needs.

As already mentioned, Activity no. 25 also includes tasks related to the accessibility of cultural events – concerts, performances, workshops, exhibitions, etc. Like with every other point of ‘Accessibility Plus’, this objective is aimed not only at people with disabilities but also, for example,

9 More information available at: <https://www.funduszeuropejskie.gov.pl/strony/o-funduszach/fundusze-europejskie-bez-barier/dostepnosc-plus/poradniki-standardy-wskazowki/> [accessed: 30 July 2021].

10 From 6 September 2021, alternative access is not automatically recognised as compliance with the accessibility provision. It can be used only if, for technical or legal reasons, the accessibility forms specified in art. 6 of the Accessibility Act cannot be implemented.

seniors. Participation in artistic activities, whether as a passive recipient or as a contributing artist, and the creation of events for wider audiences, while not easy, should be the bread and butter of every cultural entity. Even the most advanced architectural improvements and equipment will prove futile if a cultural institution or NGO does not offer projects designed with people with special needs in mind. Verbal descriptions of works of art, the multisensory experience of art, and the use of Polish Sign Language (PJM) or other alternative means of communication do not require significant financial investments but rather organisational competence and will. This requires the redefinition of one's cultural offer and its development not only for users with mobility or sensory impairments but also those with impaired memory function or intellectual disability. While this level of accessibility undoubtedly raises many difficulties, it is worth aspiring to it. Practical advice on solutions to be implemented may be found in guides and manuals for cultural institutions, developed at the regional level.¹¹

As a final note on the programme, it is worth mentioning Activity no. 18: 'Accessible Multimedia Content', whose tasks focus on the accessibility of media services and film art. The former relates to the amendment to the Broadcasting Act obliging television broadcasters to provide 50% of broadcast programmes with audio description and live subtitles in 2023. The latter task is slightly more complicated. Its aim is, on the one hand, to oblige producers of films co-financed from public funds to ensure accessibility (through audio description, subtitles for the deaf or a PJM interpreter), but on the other, to introduce accessibility standards and certificates for producers and distributors of foreign films. As a result, the content distributed by them should be made available to people with disabilities, including people with sensory impairments. This approach requires an ongoing discussion with the film community.

Activity no. 18 also specifies tasks aimed at making available broadly defined educational content such as e-textbooks, atlases, and magazines.

11 For example, *Przewodnik. Wrocławskie standardy dostępności kultury i wydarzeń. Jak umożliwić uczestnictwo w kulturze osobom z niepełnosprawnościami i seniorom* [Guide on the accessibility standards of culture and events in Wrocław. How to enable people with disabilities and seniors to participate in culture], Wrocław 2020, <https://fundacjakatarynka.pl/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Przewodnik-Wroclawskie-Standardy-Dostepnosci-Kultury-i-Wydarzen.pdf> [accessed: 4 August 2021].

The key to success in this area is to base the digitisation process on uniform rules allowing diverse groups of users, including those with disabilities, to access the content. Effective – i.e. also accessibility-oriented – digitisation is a priority due to the nature of the educational process, and professional and personal development. The digital world is part of our reality, and its impact and importance will continue to grow, as recently evidenced by the COVID-19 pandemic.

THE GUIDE

I would like to devote the last section of this article to a new initiative – the said accessibility guide for cultural institutions.¹²

As a set of guidelines for cultural entities, primarily public ones, the publication is to indicate possible accessibility solutions and facilitate their application. It is also to identify accessibility standards in culture with regard to the minimum requirements specified in the Accessibility Act. In addition, the guide is to present standards and good practices in ensuring accessibility for people with special needs, as well as promote the elimination of barriers to access to culture.

Therefore, the publication will include accessibility guidelines regarding buildings, their parts such as ticket offices, cloakrooms, entrances, and the surrounding areas – gardens, parks, small architecture, as well as general principles related to universal design, alternative access, and reasonable accommodation. As expected, designers must take institutional diversity into account and suggest how to work on spaces such as concert halls, libraries, cinemas, and exhibition halls. The architecture section of the guide will therefore refer equally to theatres, art galleries and cinemas, regardless of their size or place of operation. The aim is to create a publication as universal as possible, which will recognise the potential of different cultural entities. This rule will also apply to the organisation of cultural projects and, more broadly, activities. The publication is to include guidelines for the organisation of accessible cultural events, including those held online, and the organisation of accessible permanent, temporary and

12 At the time of writing of this article, the work on the guide was still in progress. The information provided here comes from the Detailed Description of the Subject Matter of the Order and presents the framework assumptions of the publication.

outdoor exhibitions. In addition, it will also contain advice on the organisation of working places (e.g. workstations) for users with special needs to ensure access to digitised cultural content. The guide will also discuss how to prepare a universal and inclusive cultural and educational offer dedicated to various groups of users, including those with special needs.

Another important part of the guide will cover aspects related to communication and information about cultural activities. The idea is to facilitate a dialogue with potential participants in events, which is key to including them in artistic life. The lack of proper communication and information about projects is the first and frequently insurmountable obstacle for people with special needs. The guide will end with good examples of successfully implemented accessibility projects.

SUMMARY

To conclude, I would like to emphasise that accessibility is not only a civilisational requirement but also a human right. In accordance with the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee, '[i]t is crucial to their [people with disabilities – AW] full enjoyment of civil and political rights, as well as their social, economic and cultural rights'. The same document states '[a]ccessibility benefits the whole of society' because it promotes social cohesion, and combating poverty and marginalisation.¹³ In light of the above, supporting changes in the world, which as a result has a chance of becoming more usable to all of us, seems to have substantial merit.

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13 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52013IE3000&qid=1639064919283> [accessed: 19 July 2021].

2.

**ACCESSIBILITY FROM
THE PERSPECTIVE OF
THE NATIONAL CENTRE
FOR CULTURE AND ITS
ACTIVITY**

‘ACCESSIBILITY PLUS’ AND THE ACTIVITIES OF THE NATIONAL CENTRE FOR CULTURE – ARE WE PREPARED TO WORK WITH PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS?

National Centre for Culture Poland

The accessibility of activities provided by the National Centre for Culture has been at the core of our reflection for several years. A more in-depth analysis of resources, abilities and limitations was conducted in 2019–2020. It resulted from the entry into force (in autumn 2019) of two legal acts – the Act on ensuring accessibility for people with special needs (hereinafter: the Accessibility Act) and the Act on the digital accessibility of websites and mobile applications of public entities. In the spring of 2020, an audit of the Centre’s space and extensive resources available online was carried out.

In the analysis of our resources, the state as of December 2019 was accepted as the starting point for development. In addition, several assumptions were made:

- People with special needs¹ are a group that can – and often does – include not only our users, but also the users of our partners; therefore, activities

1 This term primarily includes people using wheelchairs, people with mobility, visual, hearing and sensory impairments, short and tall people, the elderly, pregnant women, parents with small children, people with temporary disability due to an accident, and foreigners with limited knowledge of the Polish language.

implemented by the Centre as an institution, even if invisible from the outside, should take the accessibility aspect into account;

- We are not guided by rules of representation – the fact that presently none of our employees is a person that, for example, uses a wheelchair does not release us from the responsibility for the adequate adaptation of our institution; similarly – the fact that people with sensory impairments constitute a relatively small minority among the users of our activities (indeed, a minority that escapes statistics) does not exempt us from the need to make all our activities as accessible as possible;
- The accessibility of the Centre's activities refers not only to the financial and 'technical' aspects – it is critical that our entire team is prepared to act for improved accessibility, recognise its importance, and realise the situation of people with various types of disabilities and how they function.

The organisation of our activities has been primarily dictated by the last of these assumptions. In addition to the accessibility audit of our building and online resources (the 'technical' aspects), we initially focused on training employees. In 2020, despite the pandemic, the Centre managed to train the entire staff in accessibility. The training courses, conducted by experts-practitioners from the Culture Without Barriers Foundation, were intended as an attempt to enter the world of people with various types of disabilities through practical workshops at a level that, at first glance, might seem trivial: we started off by checking how a person in a wheelchair uses the toilet, how a person with visual impairment navigates a new environment, and what we should know about this. Such actions raise the team's awareness, which is crucial for any changes to happen. Consequently, the process of making the Centre accessible as an institution from early on included a self-learning experience.

The analysis of our online resources was organised in a similar manner. In addition to the audit report indicating the scope of necessary improvements, the contract also included support services for the Centre's respective organisational units responsible for websites and a re-audit of the websites after the completion of the improvement work. The process of changes and further agreements, conducted together with an external auditor, lasted essentially throughout the entire year of 2020. As part of the digital training, employees responsible for the content posted online signalled the need for a training course in accessibility, which they then attended. In addition, the analysis of material posted online by the Cen-

tre's Publishing House resulted in an ad hoc guide on the typesetting and layout of online publications.

This practice of learning digital solutions as part of our daily operations was not intended. It emerged during the adaptation of the Centre's websites to the requirements of the Web Content Accessibility Guideline (WCAG) 2.1. Met with a positive response from the heads of organisational units, it has been continued also in 2021, with the publication content prepared with the support of an external consultant.

In light of the above, can the Centre be considered a perfectly accessible institution, at least on the level specified in both acts of 2019? Of course not. However, we are in the process of implementing the solutions and activities that will allow our continuous improvement in this area. A few of them are described below.

THE ACCESSIBILITY STRATEGY

The adopted formula of systemic changes in the Centre promptly revealed that the accessibility coordinator, appointed in compliance with the Accessibility Act, cannot organise and implement the entire process of change on their own. It was necessary to formally write down the key principles and responsibilities. As a result, an internal document, *The Accessibility Strategy in the National Centre for Culture* (hereinafter: Accessibility Strategy), was drafted in autumn 2020.² The starting point for the Strategy was that 'accessibility in the Centre is a horizontal responsibility of the entire institution. The funding for the implementation of accessibility activities is secured in the budgets of individual organisational units in accordance with their competences and scope of activity'.³

In principle, the Accessibility Strategy is to serve as a set of guidelines for activities intended to improve the accessibility of projects implemented by the Centre.

In its discussion of accessibility, the Strategy progresses from its self-definition and general principles to – naturally, only outlined – specific standards of the institution's operations, e.g. the organisation of training and cultural events, and cooperation with other entities, also in terms of subsidies and grants. The subsequent sections of this article show how the standards are implemented in practice; at this point we only want to

2 Regulation No. 42/2020 of 24 September 2020 of the Director of the National Centre for Culture.

3 *The Accessibility Strategy in the National Centre for Culture.*

draw attention to the self-definition of the Centre. The Strategy defines us as an open institution that seeks to ensure the highest possible level of inclusiveness:

The National Centre for Culture is an open institution seeking to enable the participation of persons with special needs, i.e. persons who, due to their external or internal features, or because of the circumstances in which they have found themselves, must take additional action or additional measures to overcome barriers in order to participate in various spheres of life on an equal basis with other people. Therefore, accessibility measures are dedicated not only to people with diagnosed disability, but also the elderly, pregnant women, parents with young children, etc.⁴

Given that employees' awareness and competences are an important aspect of our approach to accessibility, the Strategy addresses the issue of employee and partner development in this area, indicating the minimum scope of staff training:

THE PROFESSIONALISATION OF THE CENTRE'S STAFF IN TERMS OF ACCESSIBILITY

SCOPE OF TRAINING	ADDRESSED TO	FREQUENCY
Communication and cooperation with people with different types of disabilities, including the knowledge of communication support tools Disability etiquette	All employees	Every 3 years
Creating accessible digital documents	Persons creating digital documents	Every 2 years
Creating accessible multimedia Accessibility of websites, mobile applications, tools, and software	Persons responsible for websites and social media	Every 2 years
Audit of digital documents	Heads of organisational units Persons responsible for public procurement Editors of the Centre's Publishing House Employees of the Research Department	Every 3 years
Organisation of accessible events	Employees of organisational units responsible for the preparation and implementation of cultural events	Every 3 years

4 Ibid.

SCOPE OF TRAINING	ADDRESSED TO	FREQUENCY
Recruitment and employment of people with disabilities	Employees of the organisational unit responsible for human resources	Every 5 years
Social aspects and accessibility in public procurement	Persons responsible for public procurement	Every 5 years

Source: *The Accessibility Strategy in the National Centre for Culture*

Volunteers collaborating with the Centre at artistic events and educational projects organised by the Centre should also undergo initial training on cooperation with people with disabilities, particularly those with mobility and sensory impairments. More information on this topic, using the example of, among others, this year's edition of the International Music Festival 'Eufonie', may be found below.

When constructing the Strategy, it was assumed that despite its formal and normative nature it will be constantly improved: 'Each year, by the end of March, the Centre shall review the state of the Strategy's implementation. The review shall provide the basis for the modification and development of the Strategy'.⁵

The experience (see below) from the implementation of cultural events, the Centre's training programme and the accessibility principles for beneficiaries of the grant programmes will probably serve as the main source of knowledge to update the Strategy in 2022.

THE 'EUFONIE' FESTIVAL: THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY FOR ENSURING ACCESSIBILITY AT FESTIVAL EVENTS IN 2021–2024

In the organisation of cultural events, depending on the event type, the Centre shall ensure minimum accessibility, in particular:

- a. *Assistants for people with reduced mobility, in particular for people with visual impairment, in a number adequate for the event size – at least one person for every five people with special needs;*

⁵ *The Accessibility Strategy in the National Centre for Culture*, section: 'Standards of Operation', point 2.

- b. *Accessible toilets – including portable (TOI TOI) toilets in the case of outdoor events;*
- c. *Polish Sign Language (PJM) interpretation, in particular in the case of open-access conferences;*
- d. *Subtitles on all types of presented multimedia content;*
- e. *Adequately prepared barrier-free routes (free of architectural barriers and properly marked).⁶*

At the core of the Accessibility Strategy regarding the events of the International Music Festival of Central and Eastern Europe 'Eufonie', organised since 2018, lies the idea of universal design that includes, encourages and activates all users to celebrate music together, regardless of age, education, origin, degree of disability, life situation, or limitations preventing or hindering participation in a given event. Therefore, we are looking for, on the one hand, real solutions and, on the other, compromises in terms of architectural accessibility.

What is our point of view and mindset in the planning of improved accessibility? It is essentially focused on providing the best, technically and organisationally comprehensive solutions before, during and after the festival. Our approach is oriented towards a long-term learning process with the aim of ensuring the highest possible levels of accessibility in terms of digital resources, architecture, communication, promotion and, perhaps in the future, also transport.

It is worth emphasising that in 2018⁷, when the 'Eufonie' Festival was launched by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage and the National Centre for Culture, activities ensuring accessibility during the events were still optional as a pragmatic add-on to the artistic offer of cultural institutions. For this reason, the accessibility of what was then still a fledgling festival only discovering its identity, was limited to basic accommodations mostly provided by the concert co-organisers and festival partners, e.g. the Warsaw Philharmonic, the Grand Theatre – Polish National Opera, the Palladium Theatre, the Arnold Szyfman Polish Theatre, and the Royal Castle in Warsaw – Museum, such as:

6 Ibid.

7 The 'Eufonie' Festival was inaugurated in celebration of the 100th anniversary of Poland regaining independence.

- Entrance to the building adapted for people with disabilities;
- Adapted toilets on individual floors;
- Lifts;
- Reservations of special places for people using wheelchairs;
- Contact with the Viewer Service Office/Communications Department;
- Discounts or free admission for people with disabilities and their carers;
- Additional chairs in the lobby and foyer;
- Parking spaces.

ANALYSIS AND THE STRATEGIC PLAN

When defining the action plan for 2021, conditions such as the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic and its upcoming fourth wave in Poland were taken into account.⁸ Given its complexity (many events at different locations, over 500 artists from more than 15 countries, nine days of concerts) and genre diversity (classical, electronic, contemporary, experimental and ethnic music, dance, theatrical forms), the Festival requires a substantial organisational commitment.

The events take place at different venues in Warsaw such as the Warsaw Philharmonic, the Royal Castle, the Grand Theatre – Polish National Opera, the Palladium Theatre, the Targowa Creativity Centre, the Polish Theatre, the Holy Trinity Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession, and other places located in the city centre to facilitate movement from one venue to another. We are familiar with the infrastructure and technology of some locations from the previous editions of the festival and other productions. New places are subject to on-site verification before the festival.

Throughout the year, many people are involved in the project – not only from our institution but also from outside. All activities are based on interinstitutional cooperation that involves many stages and interrelated aspects: organisational, artistic, content-related, and economic. This is the reason why accessibility implementation in all festival venues has been stretched over several years (see table below), during which solutions for various groups of users can be introduced, tested, verified, and possibly withdrawn.

8 The third edition of the Festival was cancelled and postponed to 2021 due to SARS-CoV-2 pandemic restrictions.

THE 'EUFONIE' FESTIVAL ACCESSIBILITY STRATEGY: OBJECTIVES

2021-2024			
DIGITAL ACCESSIBILITY	ACCESSIBILITY OF PROMOTION AND COMMUNICATION	ARCHITECTURAL ACCESSIBILITY	OTHER ACTIVITIES
- Accessible website www.eufonie.pl - Accessible multimedia - Induction loops - Audio description - Accessible documents at: www.eufonie.pl - Online broadcasts	- PJM interpretation of promotional and communication material - PJM interpretation of introductions to concerts - Alternative text on social media - Live subtitles – for the deaf and hard-of-hearing users of the Polish language - Audio leaflets - Materials in Braille - Enlarged print - User-friendly text - Priority service point - Phone and e-mail contact (eufonie@nck.pl) from Monday to Friday between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m.	- Layouts of the concert halls at all festival venues - Transport description and directions, infrastructure description of festival locations - Description of the architectural accessibility of the festival venues in a given edition - Tactile material/typhlographics of festival venues - Chairs in the foyer/hall/corridors and other places wherever possible - Quiet room/resting room - Parking spaces	- Cooperation with the accessibility consultant - Cooperation with associations and foundations - Professionalisation of employees, partners and volunteers taking part in a given edition of the festival - Extended offer of discounts - Several sales points - Organisation of events at different times (in the morning, afternoon, and evening), i.e. time accessibility - Changing tables for children and babies - Seat cushions for improved visibility - The right to enter with a guide dog - Festival programme in many languages - Conducting an evaluation study

Source: Own study

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACCESSIBILITY PROCESS: FESTIVAL PRODUCTION

When commencing work on the festival's accessibility, we asked ourselves many questions. Some of them are listed below:

- What should the ticket-buying journey look like from the perspective of users with disabilities, and what information about concerts should they be provided with?
- What information about the festival should be published and where?
- To what extent are we ready to implement the respective stages of the work? Which of them should be postponed to the following years, and which should be abandoned because of their limited usability and practicality?
- Which activities should we, as the organiser of the festival, implement on our own, and which together with the partners of a given edition?
- To what extent are we able to implement accessibility in terms of universal design?⁹ If this is not possible, what solution should be used: alternative access¹⁰ or reasonable accommodation?¹¹
- To what extent does the implementation of the accessibility process affect the organisational aspects of the festival, e.g. the technical production?

9 'Universal design, as defined in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, is the fundamental default instrument for the implementation of accessibility. The term refers to solutions that are usable by all people to the greatest extent possible, without the need for accommodation or specialised changes'; cf. P. Kowalski, A. Mikołajczyk, B. Zimny, *Jak wdrażać Ustawę o zapewnieniu dostępności?* [How to implement the Accessibility Act?] p. 9, https://www.funduszeuropejskie.gov.pl/media/86764/ustawa_o_dostepnosci_poradnik.pdf [accessed: 13 October 2021].

10 'Alternative access denotes organisational activities and solutions that provide persons with special needs with access to a building, but not on their own or on an equal basis with other people (the assistance of another person is necessary), or which do not provide access to a building of a public sector body but secure the use of public services in a different way (e.g. online)'; cf. *ibid.*, p. 10.

11 'Reasonable accommodation denotes the required and adequate modifications or adaptations not entailing an interference that is disproportionate or unnecessary, which are imperative in specific cases to ensure that persons with special needs can access objects and services'; cf. *ibid.*

- When should the evaluation study be conducted?
- Who should be trained in terms of accessibility?
- Are the artistic and programme plans for future years being implemented with all audiences in mind?
- Which departments must be involved in the accessibility implementation process?
- What can we implement already in 2021?
- Which external entities should we cooperate with in introducing accessibility?
- Who among us should be involved in the accessibility implementation and planning at the 'Eufonie' Festival?

These questions do not exhaust our list – there are still many accessibility queries. They emerge as a result of the legal regulations or good practices of various institutions and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), e.g. associations and foundations, which regularly post publications and guides on accessibility online. An increasing number of people provide services related to accessibility implementation, and the Centre turns to the accessibility consultant for advice. In addition, in the age of the Internet and social media, there are many citizens' initiatives that are also a source of valuable knowledge, e.g. dedicated forums, mailing lists and thematic groups for accessibility coordinators.

Some legal regulations (see below) sometimes prevent the free implementation of the idea of accessibility at the 'Eufonie' Festival in all locations in Warsaw, at least in terms of architecture.

When organising concerts in historical buildings whose structure determines architectural accessibility, we look for reasonable solutions and compromise. Given conservation protection and the history of many institutions, they cannot be tampered with, much less modernised to increase their usability and accessibility.¹² As a result, we are forced to look for the golden mean through alternative access, e.g. the support of a trained employee, partner or volunteer, or a wheelchair ramp. Unfortunately, no specific rules have been worked out yet; we are still on the path towards them. In our projects, we try to balance the guidelines, functionality and costs of the project, always with the recipients of culture in mind.

12 As clearly stated in the Act of 23 July 2003 on the protection and preservation of monuments (Journal of Laws 2021, item 710, as amended).

OPEN FESTIVAL: PLANNED ACTIVITIES

The table above outlines the planned activities that we want to implement by the end of 2024. Several of them were introduced during the third edition of the festival in 2021, e.g. a new festival website (eufonie.pl), which in the nearest future is to be fully adapted to the criteria of the digital accessibility of websites and mobile applications. It now features a special tab, 'Accessibility', to facilitate the communication of accommodations offered at the particular editions of 'Eufonie', including transport description and directions to the festival venues, with an e-mail address and a phone number for contacting the accessibility supervisor. Induction loops were installed in selected places and are planned to be implemented at all festival venues by 2024.

In terms of promotional and communication accessibility, we produced Braille leaflets with the festival programme and the most important information about the repertoire and performers, as well as audio-visual material in PJM. We also ensured the presence of a PJM interpreter for festival-related events.

Another equally important point was the professionalisation of the activities of our employees, partners and volunteers, conducted in cooperation with experts. To this end, training was organised before the festival to discuss all concert locations in detail in terms of their architectural and digital accessibility. It is worth emphasising that 2021 was a breakthrough year for us when it comes to work on accessibility. The proposed range of accommodations was not limited to minimal needs only, and it covered a significant number of users.¹³

The spectrum of accessibility activities and their implementation process have been supervised by many organisational units of the Centre, as well as the co-organisers and partners of the respective festival editions.

13 It is worth adding that special invitations to festival concerts were extended to seniors as part of the festival's senior-focused policy.

THE CENTRE'S ACTIVITIES AIMED AT THE PROFESSIONALISATION OF THE CULTURAL SECTOR AND ACCESSIBILITY

As an institution supporting the cultural sector, the National Centre for Culture feels co-responsible for the transfer of knowledge related to accessibility in the cultural sector. The Centre provides training on accessibility in the cultural sector addressed to employees of local-government cultural institutions, cultural animators, and other entities operating in the cultural sector. Accessibility is implemented in at least 20% of the Centre's training and educational activities.¹⁴

Given our impact and actual activities, the Centre is greatly committed to the transfer of knowledge on accessibility. We provide accessibility training addressed to employees of local-government cultural institutions, cultural animators, and other entities operating in the cultural sector. Accessibility is implemented in at least 20% of the Centre's training and educational activities. This postulate has been enshrined in the Accessibility Strategy and implemented in practice in the institution's operations.

In terms of the Centre's training activities, two aspects should be highlighted: (1) the professionalisation of the cultural staff in terms of accessibility; and (2) sharing the available accommodations with our training participants.

Since the earliest training activities, accessibility has been broadly defined. The training courses and webinars covered the topic of cooperation not only with people with disabilities but with all people with special needs and of different ages. This was the core assumption for the development of the 'Culture Without Exception' programme. A series of training courses, implemented under this name in 2017–2019, was entirely devoted to the preparation of a cultural offer for people with special needs. The Accessibility Act of 19 July 2019 confirmed and consolidated our thinking about accessibility in a broad and inclusive way. In 2020–2021, we continued our training activities, offering support to the cultural staff primarily in the implementation of changes proposed by the Accessibility Act.

14 *The Accessibility Strategy in the National Centre for Culture*, section: 'Cooperation', point 3.

‘CULTURE WITHOUT EXCEPTION’: ACCESSIBILITY MEANS FREEDOM

In 2017, the Centre started organising workshops and study visits as part of the ‘Culture Without Exception’ series. The main issue raised in the programme was the design of the cultural offer for various groups of users. The meetings included the exchange of good practices.

Pursuant to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, ratified in 2012, the state – and thus public sector bodies – is obliged to provide people with various types of disabilities with full access to culture. ‘Culture Without Exception’ constituted an invitation to reflect on effective communication, the accessibility of culture, and the inclusion of people with disabilities in programme activities of cultural entities.

Workshop activities were concentrated in two thematic blocks. The first focused on the design of the cultural offer for people with various types of impairments – intellectual, physical, sensory. The second thematic block was dedicated to the design of the cultural offer for different age groups – children, adults, seniors, and intergenerational groups.

The Centre invited people with disabilities, e.g. employees of Teatr 21 and the Culture Without Barriers Foundation, to conduct the classes. As a result, the training courses included not only a theoretical part but also a practical one presenting the experience of people with disabilities. Participants had to not only work with their mind but also their body. Space, touch and other senses are extremely important in terms of accessibility. The training sessions helped the participants overcome their inner barriers in interactions with people with disabilities.

The programme dedicated to work with different age groups moved ‘from the systematisation of knowledge about the current problems and needs of a given group to a review of the most recent social research to the design and prototyping of activities by the participants’.¹⁵

The training activities provided an inspiration to introduce a process of change in cultural institutions to make them more diverse and accessible. We promoted the idea of institutions being open for people with disabili-

15 M. Karowska-Koperwas, ‘Kadra Kultury’ – działania Narodowego Centrum Kultury w obszarze edukacji kulturalnej. [The Cultural Staff: The activities of the National Centre for Culture in cultural education], [in:] *Potencjał dobrego sąsiedztwa. Edukacja kulturalna w Polsce i Niemczech* [The potential of a good neighbourhood. Cultural education in Poland and Germany], Warsaw 2019, p. 171.

ties and people from various social groups – particularly in terms of the institutions’ cultural offer and infrastructure. Based on our observations, people who attended our training courses approach changes in their institutions with greater enthusiasm, which is important in the overall process of supporting cultural staff as a vital component of the Centre’s mission.

The participants in our training activities acquired a wide range of competences in various areas, as they:

- learned about the characteristics and specific needs of people with different types of disabilities and of different age groups;
- learned what contributes to effective communication with people with different types of disabilities and of different age groups;
- learned about the examples of tools and techniques that make it possible to share culture with people with different types of disabilities and of different age groups;
- learned about the examples of specific cultural activities conducted by, with or for people with different types of disabilities and of different age groups;
- met artists and experts with different types of disabilities;
- visited institutions whose activities involve people with different types of disabilities and of different age groups;
- learned about documents that oblige cultural institutions to ensure access to culture for people with disabilities, and where to look for information about different types and degrees of disability;
- learned which institutions and organisations they can cooperate with when designing such activities.

The participants in the ‘Culture Without Exception’ training courses appreciated the presentation of the training modules from the perspective of both people with special needs and the foundations and organisations that deal with inclusion. The training activities allowed them to learn about the living conditions of people with disabilities and their needs in daily functioning – crucial also in terms of access to culture. Without this knowledge, it would be difficult to meet the expectations of potential users and prepare an offer that enables them to participate in culture.

Another advantage was that, in addition to the content, the training courses also addressed the issue of soft skills necessary in work with people with special needs. The sessions included an empirical component as well as space for own reflections and conclusions. Study visits, during which the participants could actually see the activities of cultural educators, also proved to be very valuable.

This initiative is best summed up in an evaluation by one of the participants: 'The workshop with Teatr 21 was like an earthquake to me. I can't stop thinking about it. Both in terms of working with people with disabilities, but also in my private life. For now, I can see that... I once again find people fascinating'.

TRAINING ACTIVITIES IN 2019–2020

Since the Accessibility Act entered into force, the need for the training of accessibility coordinators has increased. The function, which is now mandatory in every institution of public authority, is also increasingly present in cultural centres and centres of culture, as well as artistic institutions: museums and theatres. Although cultural institutions are not legally obliged to appoint accessibility coordinators, such functions are created, with people with special needs and the accessibility of institutions in mind. Consequently, a great need has arisen to professionalise cultural staff in the responsibilities and tasks of an accessibility coordinator, and in the legal aspects of this function.

The training 'Accessibility Coordinator: Responsibilities and tasks' was held for the first time in 2020, and has attracted the most interest out of all available training courses ever since. In 2020–2021, a total of 220 people applied for the training. Altogether, eight editions were organised and attended by nearly 120 employees of cultural institutions all over Poland.

Given this considerable interest, a webinar was held in July 2021, which could accommodate larger numbers of participants. It is available on the Centre's YouTube channel in an unrestricted form, with subtitles and PJM interpretation.

Despite additional training dates and webinars, the need for training accessibility coordinators in cultural institutions has not been met yet. The process of implementing changes is still ongoing and the demand remains high. We continue to receive inquiries about the next editions of the training from cultural institutions all over Poland. Many of them are also interested in organising accessibility training courses for the entire staff.

In addition to the accessibility coordinator training, we also conducted a training session called 'Accessibility of educational activities in a cultural institution' on involving seniors in local volunteering activities, and a webinar 'Adapting the institution to the needs of people with disabilities'.

In March 2020, the latter was posted on the Centre's YouTube channel, and it has had 1 250 views since then.¹⁶

The participants in the training sessions and webinars appreciated the broader perspective they gained with respect to accessibility in cultural institutions, which ceased to be an unfamiliar topic. Another significant advantage was the focus not only on architectural barriers, but also on how the cultural offer can and should be designed with the needs of all users in mind. The participants also expanded their knowledge on legal acts regarding accessibility.

In the evaluation questionnaire, one of the participants wrote: 'During the training I learned about new ways of making the cultural offer accessible to people with disabilities, especially in terms of practice. I can see more opportunities for myself and my institution in terms of accessibility'.

Training courses held as part of the 'Cultural Staff' and 'Culture Without Exception' programmes for educators, animators, directors, and employees of cultural institutions from all over Poland have so far been attended by approx. 1 000 people, with 350 people participating directly in stationary and online sessions, and approx. 650 people in webinars.¹⁷ In 2016–2021, the Centre organised 11 stationary training sessions, nine online ones and three webinars on accessibility, e.g. 'Inclusion of the blind and deaf-blind in cultural activities', 'Inclusion of people with hearing impairment in cultural activities', 'Inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities, Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), and Down Syndrome in cultural activities', 'Designing a cultural offer for seniors', and 'Accessibility Coordinator: Responsibilities and tasks'.

RECRUITMENT FOR THE CENTRE'S TRAINING ACTIVITIES

When recruiting for our training courses, we paid attention to their accessibility. This element of the Centre's activities is also included in the Accessibility Strategy. Our application form contains questions about participants' needs regarding the training accessibility. Various accommodations are available, in particular:

- Hotel accommodation in a barrier-free room with a toilet accessible to people with reduced mobility;

16 Data as of 14 December 2021.

17 Data as of August 2021.

- Toilets on the same floor and near the lecture/workshop rooms;
- The presence of a guide dog or an assistance dog at the training;
- The presence of a PJM/Sign Language System (SLS) interpreter or an induction loop for the deaf and hard-of-hearing;
- Training material adapted to a given type of disability, e.g. enlarged print, electronic version;
- Adequate lighting and sound system (in justified cases also an induction loop);
- Diet adjustments as dictated by the participant's health status;
- Subtitles on multimedia presentations during training;
- In justified cases – PJM/SLS interpretation.

The recruitment form was prepared on the webankieta.pl website. In 2021, this service modified its survey forms to ensure their compliance with the WCAG and WCAG 2.0 standards, thus making them accessible to people with special needs. When answering the questionnaire, it is possible to choose an option allowing to complete the questions using a keyboard. Forms are accordingly adapted for screen reader software.

Making institutions accessible is a process that the Centre has been supporting for several years, recognising the need for further training offers in this area. The changes that have taken place in institutions opening to people with special needs are already significant and noticeable: starting with people as the most important part of this process, who are increasingly more aware of and skilled in welcoming people with special needs at their institutions, to a carefully prepared cultural offer and architectural accessibility. Accessibility means choice; it creates opportunities for all people to enjoy culture, without exceptions, and as such it is one of the most important tasks in the professionalisation of the cultural sector.

ACCESSIBILITY IN THE CENTRE'S GRANT PROGRAMMES

When awarding grants and co-financing projects or when deciding on co-operation in their organisation, the Centre takes accessibility, including the digital accessibility of the implemented projects, into account. Accessibility is verified both at the stage of application assessment during the

*call for project proposals and the qualification of projects for cooperation, and upon the settlement of the co-financed projects and tasks.*¹⁸

The provisions of the Accessibility Strategy regarding the Centre's co-operation with other entities specify that '[a]ccessibility is verified both at the stage of application assessment during the call for project proposals and the qualification of projects for cooperation, and upon the settlement of the co-financed projects and tasks'.¹⁹

Formal specifications were in fact preceded by practice: since 2019, in connection with the entry into force of the said acts, the Centre has introduced various provisions in programme regulations emphasising the accessibility of activities financed and co-financed from public funds.

In 2021, the Centre is implementing 11 programmes and other public interventions via grants, supporting various areas of activities of cultural institutions, NGOs, and other entities operating in the field of culture. Six of them are the Centre's own programmes and three were launched by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage. The remaining ones include one grant activity under the National Reading Development Programme 2.0 and one grant competition financed from EU funds.

We have attempted to analyse the applicants' approach to accessibility two years after the formal provisions and expectations in this area were added to the programmes.

For the purposes of this article, an analysis has been conducted of all tasks qualified for implementation in 2021 under the following programmes:

- *Edukacja Kulturalna* ('Cultural Education');
- *Kultura Dostępna* ('Accessible Culture');
- *Infrastruktura Domów Kultury* ('Infrastructure of Cultural Centres');
- *Kultura – Interwencje* ('Culture – Interventions').

Programmes with a several-year history of implementation, whose documents were accordingly modified in compliance with the amended accessibility regulations, were selected for the analysis. Three of them,

18 *The Accessibility Strategy in the National Centre for Culture*, section: 'Co-operation', point 1.

19 Ibid.

Edukacja Kulturalna, *Kultura Dostępna* and *Kultura - Interwencje*, can be classified as 'soft' programmes in which public funds are allocated to the development of social capital through cultural activities, and one – *Infrastruktura Domów Kultury* as a 'hard' programme that aims to modernise and expand the infrastructure of cultural centres and centres of culture and art, as well as retrofit them (e.g. purchase of musical instruments).

The tables below present excerpts from the 2021 grant programme procedures which serve as a framework and guidelines for applicants regarding the accessibility of their tasks. The documents are also intended to educate in terms of the applicable laws.

Before presenting the data collected with respect to the tasks implemented in 2021, let us outline the accessibility provisions in the listed programmes depending on their strategic aims.

IDENTIFIED AIMS OF PROGRAMMES REGARDING ACCESSIBILITY

PROGRAMME NAME	PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES
<i>Edukacja Kulturalna</i>	<i>One of the main assumptions of this programme is to support tasks enabling the participation and integration of representatives of various social and age groups, as well as to increase accessibility to the effects of the implemented tasks for people with special needs referred to in art. 2, point 3 of the Act of 19 July 2019 on ensuring accessibility for people with special needs (Journal of Laws 2020, item 1062), including persons with disabilities.</i>
<i>Kultura Dostępna</i>	<i>An important assumption of this programme is to enable the participation and social integration of representatives of various social groups, e.g. school children and youth, the elderly, as well as to support tasks ensuring accessibility to the effects of the implemented tasks for people with special needs referred to in art. 2, point 3 of the Act of 19 July 2019 on ensuring accessibility for people with special needs (Journal of Laws 2020, item 1062), including persons with disabilities.</i>
<i>Kultura - Interwencje</i>	<i>The aim of this programme is to create the conditions for strengthening the identity and participation in culture at the regional, local and national levels, as well as preserving Polish historical heritage through financial support for the implementation of projects promoting cultural heritage and increasing the presence of culture in social life.</i>
<i>Infrastruktura Domów Kultury</i>	<i>An important aim of this programme is to increase accessibility to the effects of the implemented tasks for people with special needs referred to in art. 2, point 3 of the Act of 19 July 2019 on ensuring accessibility for people with special needs (Journal of Laws 2020, item 1062), including persons with disabilities.</i>

Source: Programme regulations/specifications; own elaboration

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IN THE PROGRAMME DOCUMENTS

PROGRAMME NAME	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, DEFINITIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS INCLUDED IN THE PROGRAMME REGULATIONS
<i>Edukacja Kulturalna</i>	<i>Activities related to ensuring accessibility for people with special needs, including persons with disabilities (in accordance with the scope of the programme) may be implemented as an independent task; people with special needs are defined in art. 2, point 3 of the Act of 19 July 2019 on ensuring accessibility for people with special needs (Journal of Laws 2020, item 1062), including persons with disabilities.</i>
<i>Kultura Dostępna</i>	<i>Types of eligible tasks include: Training courses on adapting the form of communication to ensure accessibility for people with special needs, including persons with disabilities. The aim of this programme is to support non-commercial tasks offering access to the cultural offer entirely free of charge. As a result, the programme does not provide for making profit from the task implementation and state aid or de minimis aid co-financing. Additional provisions for online activities: All material created as part of the task implementation carried out online must comply with the requirements specified in art. 5 of the Act of 4 April 2019 on the digital accessibility of websites and mobile applications of public entities (Journal of Laws 2019, item 848). During the implementation and after the completion of the task, the paid distribution of online content produced as part of the task is not permitted.</i>
<i>Kultura – Interwencje</i>	<i>The implementation of the tasks specified (in the programme) may include: the production of audio/video recordings, the recording of performances, publications, audio description, the preparation of films with PJM/SLS interpretation or films in other forms of communication with the Deaf-Blind, and the creation of a mobile application. These activities cannot be carried out as a separate task or constitute the main/dominant element of the task. During the implementation and after the completion of the task, the paid distribution of publications, mobile applications or recordings produced as part of the task is not permitted.</i>
<i>Infrastruktura Domów Kultury</i>	None

Source: Programme regulations/specifications; own elaboration

A detailed specification of the types of costs that may be incurred as part of the grant is an important indication for applicants that also determines the content of the tasks to be carried out. The next table presents excerpts from the lists of eligible costs in terms of accessibility.

At this point, it is worth highlighting that, in its assumptions, the *Kultura Dostępna* programme increases access to cultural objects and participation in culture at various levels, while the basic condition for funding is the non-commercial nature of the tasks – access to them should be entirely free of charge.

ELIGIBLE COSTS

PROGRAMME NAME	EXCERPTS FROM THE LISTS OF ELIGIBLE COSTS
<i>Edukacja Kulturalna</i>	<i>Cost category:</i> <i>Costs related to the adaptation of communication forms to ensure accessibility for people with special needs, including people with disabilities.</i> <i>Applies to:</i> – Rental of the necessary equipment to facilitate access to culture for people with special needs, including people with disabilities; – Cost of an additional service of a specialised guide (e.g. in terms of audio description, sign language); – Cost of training courses on adapting the communication form for people with special needs, including people with disabilities; – Sign language interpretation; – Preparation and production of audio description.
<i>Kultura Dostępna</i>	<i>Cost category:</i> <i>Costs related to the adaptation of activities and communication forms to ensure accessibility for people with special needs, including people with disabilities.</i> <i>Applies to:</i> – Rental of the necessary equipment to facilitate access to culture for people with special needs, including people with disabilities; – Cost of an additional service of a specialised guide (e.g. in terms of audio description, sign language); – Cost of training courses on adapting the communication form for people with special needs, including people with disabilities; – Purchase or production of material that aids the reception of the cultural offer, including typhlographics, mock-ups; – Preparation and production of audio description; – Sign language interpretation; – Adaptation of websites for people with special needs, including people with disabilities.

PROGRAMME NAME	EXCERPTS FROM THE LISTS OF ELIGIBLE COSTS
<i>Kultura – Interwencje</i>	<i>Cost category:</i> <i>Costs related to the adaptation of activities and communication forms to the needs of people with disabilities.</i> <i>This category includes:</i> <i>– Rental of the necessary equipment to facilitate access to cultural objects for people with disabilities;</i> <i>– Cost of specialised guide services with audio description; preparation and implementation of educational paths for people with disabilities, typhlographics, films with PJM/SLS interpretation or other forms of communication with the Deaf-Blind;</i> <i>– Adaptation of websites to the needs of people with different types of disabilities;</i> <i>– Development of mobile applications.</i> <i>In the category of fees and remunerations:</i> <i>– Remunerations of the carers of children and/or disabled people participating in the task.</i>
<i>Infrastruktura Domów Kultury</i>	<i>Construction works, including extension, superstructure, reconstruction, renovation, along with the purchase of necessary construction equipment, implemented exclusively in the already existing buildings, and the purchase of equipment for the purposes of cultural education.</i> <i>This category includes:</i> <i>– Specialised equipment enabling access to the educational offer for people with special needs, including people with disabilities;</i> <i>– Assembly/installation of the purchased equipment or furnishings;</i> <i>– Transport of the purchased equipment or furnishings.</i>

Source: Programme regulations/specifications; own elaboration

In accordance with the Accessibility Strategy, experts evaluate grant applications based on detailed criteria and accessibility provisions.

EXCERPTS FROM THE APPLICATION EVALUATION CRITERIA

PROGRAMME NAME	EVALUATION CRITERION
<i>Edukacja Kulturalna</i>	Criterion of compliance with the strategic aims of the programme: <i>The task focuses on the participation of social groups whose access to cultural services is hindered (e.g. seniors, people from at-risk communities, people living in degraded and revitalised areas), in particular on accessibility for people with special needs referred to in the Act of 19 July 2019 on ensuring accessibility for people with special needs (Journal of Laws 2020, item 1062), including persons with disabilities.</i>

PROGRAMME NAME	EVALUATION CRITERION
<i>Kultura Dostępna</i>	Criterion of compliance with the strategic aims of the programme: <i>The potential of the task in the field of strengthening the participation in culture of groups whose access to cultural services is hindered, in particular accessibility for people with special needs, referred to in the Act of 19 July 2019 on ensuring accessibility for people with special needs (Journal of Laws 2020, item 1062), including persons with disabilities.</i>
<i>Kultura – Interwencje</i>	Criterion included in the social assessment: – Equal opportunities in access to culture, with particular emphasis on areas with a limited representation of cultural entities; – Use of cultural potential, local connections and relations with other communities; creating conditions for the development of artistic activity and open attitudes in social life; – Well-thought-out selection of the target group of users, adequate to the planned activities; – Making it possible for people with special needs, referred to in the Act of 19 July 2019 on ensuring accessibility for people with special needs, including persons with disabilities, to participate in the task.
<i>Infrastruktura Domów Kultury</i>	<i>The task was designed taking into account accessibility for people with special needs, referred to in the Act of 19 July 2019 on ensuring accessibility for people with special needs (Journal of Laws 2020, item 1062), including persons with disabilities.</i> The assessment also includes: <i>Increased access to the cultural offer and the adequacy of the implemented activities with respect to the needs of the group of users identified in the applicant's cultural offer (which may include people with special needs).</i>

Source: Programme regulations/specifications; own elaboration

In reference to the assessment of modernisation applications submitted in the *Infrastruktura Domów Kultury* programme, it is important to bear in mind that all planned activities must comply with the Polish Construction Law, which obliges all participants in the construction process (designers, investors, and other people) to take into account the needs of people with disabilities in the design process and later usage. Importantly, construction law defines people with disabilities in accordance with art. 1 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, adopted in New York on 13 December 2006 (Journal of Laws 2012, item 1169, and Journal of Laws 2018, item 1217), additionally extending it to include the elderly. According to the Convention, '[p]ersons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others'.

FIELD IN THE APPLICATION FORM

PROGRAMME NAME	NAME OF THE APPLICATION FIELD REFERRING TO ACCESSIBILITY	HINT DISPLAYED AS AN INFOTIP WHEN COMPLETING THE APPLICATION	HINT IN THE MODEL APPLICATION PREPARED FOR APPLICANTS, AVAILABLE ON THE CENTRE'S WEBSITE
Edukacja Kulturalna	Information on the use of the grant funds to ensure accessibility for people with special needs, referred to in the Act of 19 July 2019 on ensuring accessibility for people with special needs, including persons with disabilities	Present all activities included in the task which aim to ensure accessibility for people with special needs.	Pursuant to the Act, ensuring accessibility for people with special needs is the obligation of public sector bodies (art. 3 and 4), while (art. 5) entrepreneurs and NGOs (referred to in art. 3, section 2 of the Act of 24 April 2003 on public benefit and volunteer work) should strive to ensure the accessibility of their activities for people with special needs. The accessibility fields, as specified in the Act, refer to architectural, digital, information and communication accessibility.
Kultura Dostępna	Information on the use of the grant funds to ensure accessibility for people with special needs, referred to in the Act of 19 July 2019 on ensuring accessibility for people with special needs, including persons with disabilities	Present all activities included in the task which aim to ensure accessibility for people with special needs.	Pursuant to the Act, ensuring accessibility for people with special needs is the obligation of public sector bodies (art. 3 and 4), while (art. 5) entrepreneurs and NGOs (referred to in art. 3, section 2 of the Act of 24 April 2003 on public benefit and volunteer work) should strive to ensure the accessibility of their activities for people with special needs. The accessibility fields, as specified in the Act, refer to architectural, digital, information and communication accessibility.

FIELD IN THE APPLICATION FORM – CONT.

PROGRAMME NAME	NAME OF THE APPLICATION FIELD REFERRING TO ACCESSIBILITY	HINT DISPLAYED AS AN INFOTIP WHEN COMPLETING THE APPLICATION	HINT IN THE MODEL APPLICATION PREPARED FOR APPLICANTS, AVAILABLE ON THE CENTRE'S WEBSITE
Kultura – Interwencje	Does the applicant provide (if so, please describe how) the possibility for people with special needs, referred to in the Act of 19 July 2019 on ensuring accessibility for people with special needs, including persons with disabilities, to participate in the task?	Present all activities included in the task which aim to ensure accessibility for people with special needs.	The accessibility fields, as specified in the Act, refer to architectural, digital, information and communication accessibility.
Infrastruktura Domów Kultury	Information on the use of the grant funds to ensure accessibility for people with special needs, referred to in the Act of 19 July 2019 on ensuring accessibility for people with special needs, including persons with disabilities.	Present all activities included in the task which aim to ensure accessibility for people with special needs.	Pursuant to the Act, ensuring accessibility for people with special needs is the obligation of public sector bodies (art. 3 and 4), while (art. 5) entrepreneurs and NGOs (referred to in art. 3, section 2 of the Act of 24 April 2003 on public benefit and volunteer work) should strive to ensure the accessibility of their activities for people with special needs. The accessibility fields, as specified in the Act, refer to architectural, digital, information and communication accessibility.

Source: Own study

As a rule, the assessment of all public interventions, including the Centre's grant programmes, also focuses on the management of the funding – compliance with applicable laws, cost-effectiveness, adequacy. It is worth pointing out that the regulations that are currently in force in Poland, following the UN Convention, invoke the category of reasonable accommodation, i.e. the required and adequate modifications or adaptations that do not entail costs which are disproportionate or unnecessary.

ANALYSIS OF APPLICATIONS IMPLEMENTED IN 2021

A total of 772 applications were reviewed including:

- 208 applications in the *Edukacja Kulturalna* programme;
- 154 in the *Kultura Dostępna* programme;
- 262 in the *Kultura – Interwencje* programme;
- 148 in the *Infrastruktura Domów Kultury* programme.

They translated into 148 investment tasks and 624 soft tasks (ensuring access to cultural objects, cultural education, cultural animation).

For classification purposes, 13 accessibility categories were distinguished based on application descriptions:

- Carers/assistants
This category includes volunteers and people hired to support persons with special needs in the task.
- Interpreters
In particular, we verified how applicants planned the presence of PJM interpreters, both simultaneous and available online.
- Coaches/therapists
This is an accessibility category related to conducting classes with people with special needs, in which not only the elimination of communication barriers but also a specific methodology and preparation are required (e.g. occupational therapists).
- Audio description/subtitles for people with hearing impairment
Accessibility related to the elimination of barriers in communication with the Deaf, Blind, and Deaf-Blind.
- Typhlographics/mock-ups/materials in Braille
This type of accommodation is most frequently used in museum projects aimed at increasing the accessibility of cultural objects and is therefore present in the Centre's soft programmes to a limited extent.
- Induction loops

The use of hearing support systems for people with hearing impairment during the implementation of tasks.

- Website accommodation/information and communication accessibility
In this category, particular attention was paid to declarations of compliance with the WCAG 2.1 guidelines and the description of website accessibility in terms of perceptibility, functionality, intelligibility and compatibility in accordance with the guidelines.
- Architectural accommodations (barrier-free architecture)
In the case of the *Infrastruktura Domów Kultury* programme, we counted the number of reconstructions aimed at the elimination of architectural barriers, such as door widening, toilet accommodation, ramps, etc., and the choice of a venue for the task (e.g. a concert) which was adapted to the needs of people with disabilities.
- Development of sensory paths
This category included the development of both sensory paths facilitating spatial orientation and therapeutic sensory paths.
- Transport provision
This category included applications which ensured the organised or individual transport of participants.
- Reaching a group of users at risk of exclusion (e.g. seniors, single mothers)
This criterion extends beyond the basic definition of accessibility. We verified whether applicants envisaged a special way (e.g. through cooperation with other entities) in which they planned to reach excluded groups such as victims of violence, single mothers, seniors, prisoners.
- Offer free of charge
The possibility to participate in the task free of charge may be, although it does not have to be, a form of opening to potential users on lower incomes.
- Transfer of the offer/accessibility training for cultural staff
The following were monitored to verify whether this category of accessibility was present in the applications:
 - Organisation of training on accessibility or work with people with special needs;
 - Training of volunteers/staff on supporting participation in a specific task (e.g. assistance in reaching the designated sector during a concert, etc.);
 - Organisation of conferences and congresses on accessibility;
 - Off-site activities in places with no direct access to culture;

– Purchase of, for example, mobile stages/auditoriums with the aim of moving the cultural offer to a space that is free of architectural and technical barriers.

It is worth noting that these categories do not list activities related to the accessibility of publications, e.g. e-books in accessible formats, although this is a category directly associated with access to cultural objects. The activity-based budget that is currently in force does not allow the Centre to co-finance publishing projects (in paper or electronic format).

In addition to the identification of 13 categories of accessibility, we also verified whether its costs were included in the task budgets.

The table below summarises the types of accommodations indicated in the applications.

ACCESSIBILITY DECLARATIONS

Of the 772 analysed applications, accessibility was addressed in 690 (approx. 89%) and not addressed in 82 (approx. 11%). Most of the applications were investment tasks related to the purchase of fixed assets (e.g. instruments). In addition, this group also included tasks related to, for example, the inventory of cemeteries or other tasks performed by a team of specialists without the specification of direct participants in the activities (such tasks were primarily represented in the *Kultura – Interwencje* programme). The applications that did not take accessibility into account also include those that contained general declarations of compliance with the Accessibility Act but did not provide any specifications regarding the actual actions or solutions.

Of the 624 analysed soft programme applications, as many as 616 (approx. 99%) addressed the issue of accessibility. Only eight applications (approx. 1%) did not refer to any of the 13 categories of accessibility identified for the purposes of this article.

In 77 applications, one (not combined with any other) category of accessibility was declared (free-of-charge offer in most projects and barrier-free architecture in 10 projects).

In 248 applications, two categories were indicated (most often the free-of-charge offer combined with architectural accessibility).

LIST OF ACCESSIBILITY CATEGORIES INDICATED IN THE APPLICATIONS

PROGRAMME NAME	NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS	ACCESSIBILITY NOT INCLUDED 11 (21 - the information provided in 10 applications does not indicate that accessibility was actually taken into account in the tasks)	COST OF ACCESSIBILITY INCLUDED IN THE TASK BUDGET	ACCESSIBILITY CATEGORIES												
				CARERS/ASSISTANTS	INTERPRETERS	COACHES/THERAPISTS	AUDIO DESCRIPTION/SUBTITLES FOR PEOPLE WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENT	TYPOLOGRAPHICS/MOCK-UPS/MATERIALS IN BRAILLE	INDUCTION LOOPS	WEBSITE ACCOMMODATION/INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION ACCESSIBILITY	ARCHITECTURAL ACCOMMODATIONS (BARRIER-FREE ARCHITECTURE)	SENSORY PATHS	TRANSPORT PROVISION	REACHING A GROUP OF USERS AT RISK OF EXCLUSION (E.G. SENIORS, SINGLE MOTHERS)	OFFER FREE OF CHARGE	TRANSFER OF THE OFFER/ ACCESSIBILITY TRAINING FOR CULTURAL STAFF
<i>Edukacja Kulturalna</i>	208		96	31	41	39	48	10	11	69	110	4	15	38	182	12
<i>Kultura Dostępna</i>	154	0	125	37	40	16	42	12	7	57	51	3	28	88	154	65
<i>Kultura - Interwencje</i>	262	7	20	28	18	6	26	7	1	36	194	2	5	20	251	4
<i>Infrastruktura Domów Kultury</i>	148	64 (mostly purchase-only tasks)	82	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1	n/a	77	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	7
Total:	772	82 (92)	323	96	99	61	116	29	20	162	432	9	48	146	587	88

Source: Own study

A combination of three categories of accessibility was declared by 109 applicants. Usually, it was the free-of-charge offer together with: the barrier-free architecture and website accommodation (20 applications); the support of assistants and barrier-free architecture (14 applications); the website accommodation and audio description/subtitles for people with hearing impairment (eight applications); reaching a group of users at risk of exclusion and barrier-free architecture (eight applications); and reaching a group of users at risk of exclusion and the transfer of the offer/training of the staff (eight applications).

Furthermore, 74 applications declared a total of four categories of accessibility, 62 – a total of five, 33 – a total of six, eight – a total of seven, one application revealed a total of eight categories, while nine or ten categories were indicated by two applications. The data is presented in the table below.

CATEGORIES OF ACCESSIBILITY IN TASKS IMPLEMENTED UNDER
THE PROGRAMMES: *KULTURA DOSTĘPNA*, *EDUKACJA KULTURALNA*,
KULTURA - INTERWENCJE

NUMBER OF ACCESSIBILITY CATEGORIES DECLARED IN THE APPLICATION	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Number of applications	8	77	248	109	74	62	33	8	1	2	2

Source: Own study

In the applications declaring three or more categories of accessibility, one can see the programme intention, usually also described in the project purposes, to involve people with special needs in cultural activities or to make cultural objects accessible. Despite the large diversity of tasks, the following groups of projects can be distinguished:

1. Educational and animation projects implemented 'with' and 'for' a specific group of people with disabilities (or other people at risk of exclusion), frequently by associations of people with disabilities or in cooperation with them, as well as with institutions and services such as community self-help centres, occupational therapy workshops, social assistance houses, rehabilitation-educational care centres, municipal social assistance centres, etc. For example, the 1st Festival of Art of Young People with Disabilities 'Heartscape' in Łódź and the 2021 'Sensitivity Resides in Each of Us'

project by the Jan Wilkowski Puppet Stage in Kwidzyn were addressed to people with disabilities, including those with intellectual impairment and ASD, and were developed with the needs of a specific group in mind based on the previous experience of working with them. Another interesting task in this category was 'Embrace Art 4.0. Portraits. Workshops for Mothers and Children', addressed exclusively to victims of violence and children with Foetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS). Its aim was to use art to strengthen the mother-child bond.

2. Open tasks (complying with accessibility requirements) – typically: outdoor concerts, concerts in auditoriums/event halls or buildings of sacral architecture; exhibitions; celebrations held to commemorate certain figures or events.
3. Tasks intended to make cultural objects accessible – for example, theatre and film festivals such as the 'Bajdurek' Children and Youth Theatre Festival organised by the 'Sokół' Małopolska Centre of Culture. This event promotes 'openness to all age and social groups, also to people with special needs'. The building of the Centre is free of architectural and technical barriers. Volunteers are involved in providing assistance and in the organisation of the audience. Another example is the mountain-themed film festival organised by the Andrzej Zawada Polish Himalayan Mountaineering Foundation, which includes the Polish Association of the Deaf in ensuring the festival's accessibility.
4. Training tasks – such as the 1st Silesian Accessibility Conference 'Together for Culture' in Katowice and the 'Visual CoLABorations' project addressed to artists, the aim of which is to include blind people in cultural life and promote disability studies in the artistic community.

ACCESSIBILITY COSTS IN TASK BUDGET ESTIMATES

The table on page 66 shows that less than 50% of tasks declaring accessibility list the adequate costs in their budget estimates. Others do not feature such costs. The vast majority of projects are implemented in the purposefully chosen, architecturally and technically adapted locations. In many budget estimates, the accessibility costs are included, for example, in remuneration for design or typesetting (e.g. user-friendly text), website administration costs (e.g. compliance with WCAG 2.1.), and video production costs.

The analysis of budget cost types reveals that costs are related to construction works (elimination of architectural barriers) and investment

purchases (e.g. lifts), while in soft projects, they are typically incurred in the remuneration of PJM interpreters, website accommodation, the preparation of audio description or subtitles, and transport provision.

These observations may suggest that the accessibility of projects, albeit present, is not necessarily reflected in budget estimates. Applicants already have access to well-adapted infrastructure and trained staff, and do not need to incur additional costs in this respect. In turn, the planned costs may include the necessary scope of accessibility, e.g. services related to the preparation of content for the website or a publication, the rental of premises, ordering transport services, etc.

ACCESSIBILITY CATEGORIES

The presence of carers and assistants of people with disabilities was included in 96 applications out of the 624 in soft programmes. However, this number seems to be underestimated. For example, there are celebration events attended by veterans which provide the support of volunteers; however, their assistance was not included in the applications. An interesting example is the 14th International Festival The Pearl of Baroque – Masters' Concerts, organised by the Pearl of Baroque Foundation, where among the volunteers providing support to the festival participants are also people with disabilities.

The services of PJM interpreters were listed in 99 applications.

The work of coaches and therapists-specialists conducting classes was indicated in 61 applications. At this point, it is worth mentioning the 'O!SWÓJ 21' project by the Teatr 21 Foundation, whose workshops are conducted by people with intellectual impairments, in particular Down Syndrome and ASD.

In 115 tasks, accessibility was declared with respect to barrier-free communication with people who are deaf, blind, and deaf-blind.

A total of 29 tasks declared the use of typhlographics/mock-ups and materials in Braille. The reason why this number is not higher may be explained by the general shift from Braille text to audio content.

The use of induction loops was declared by 20 applicants in soft programmes. However, it is very likely that many concert halls, theatres and other cultural venues, where tasks are implemented, are already fitted with induction loops that can also be used by the task participants. Information and communication accessibility, in particular website accommodation, was indicated in 162 applications.

Architectural accommodations (barrier-free architecture) were declared in 432 applications. Next to free admission, this proved to be the most common category of accessibility. This is also a category whose declaration raised doubts in several applications. It seems that the actual architectural accessibility, e.g. access to toilets, was not always verified with due diligence. Some applications informed that activities would take place in the open air/open urban space, and ‘thus in an accessible location’. Naturally, such assumptions are unjustified.

The creation of sensory pathways was declared by nine applicants, while transport provision by 48.

An interesting category of accessibility was ‘reaching a group of users at risk of exclusion’. Such activities were planned by 146 applicants. In addition to reaching specific groups of people with disabilities through associations, schools and public institutions, the applicants also intended to reach seniors (through institutions, village mayors, parishes), single mothers, prisoners, victims of violence (also with the support of various types of institutions and associations). Many projects were planned as part of the ongoing cooperation with socially marginalised groups, with their offer responding to the verified needs. Many of the analysed applications were good examples of local cross-sectoral partnerships.

Free-of-charge participation in the task was declared in 587 applications (154 of them were tasks implemented as part of the *Kultura Dostępna* programme where free admission is a requirement).

It is also worth noting that while certain initiatives were available at a charge (typically, an admission fee in the form of entrance tickets), discounts and symbolic fees were available for people with disabilities and their carers and for seniors.

The collection of applications implemented in 2021 constitutes very interesting research material that undoubtedly deserves an in-depth qualitative analysis outside the (limited) purview of this article. Nevertheless, it is our hope that this brief presentation of the situation two years after the Accessibility Act came into force is not only interesting but also thought-provoking.

SUMMARY

Accessibility has been increasingly present in the Centre’s activities for several years. It is visible in our projects in the form of training courses

and the professionalisation of the cultural sector, reflection on the quality of projects and activities co-financed by the Centre from public funds, and as independently implemented cultural projects, regardless of the nominal target group.

The past two years, since the entry into force of the Accessibility Act, have contributed to the systematisation of knowledge spread across the entire institution, comprehensive training of our own employees, and the development of an approach and a recommended code of conduct in terms of accessibility and the related success criteria. We will definitely continue to monitor this process in order to systematically update (and undoubtedly expand) our activities. Our Accessibility Strategy is, by definition, an evolving document – the state of its implementation will next be reviewed in the first quarter of 2022.

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ACCESSIBILITY ASSESSMENT OF COMMUNITY CENTRES: SELECTED RESULTS OF A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY

National Centre for Culture Poland

In 2019, the National Centre for Culture conducted a multi-module study of community centres. Its aim was to establish the trends in the programme activities of these institutions, their current needs, and their relations with the community. The respondents in the survey were directors of community centres and employees with many years of experience in the institution and extensive knowledge of its activities. The study covered 1 076 local government community centres. Based on the collected data, the publication *Oswajając zmienność. Kultura lokalna z perspektywy domów kultury* [Taming volatility. Local culture from the perspective of community centres] was issued in 2021, which presents the condition of community centres on multiple levels. This article focuses on one of the studied elements – the adaptation of institutions for people with special needs.

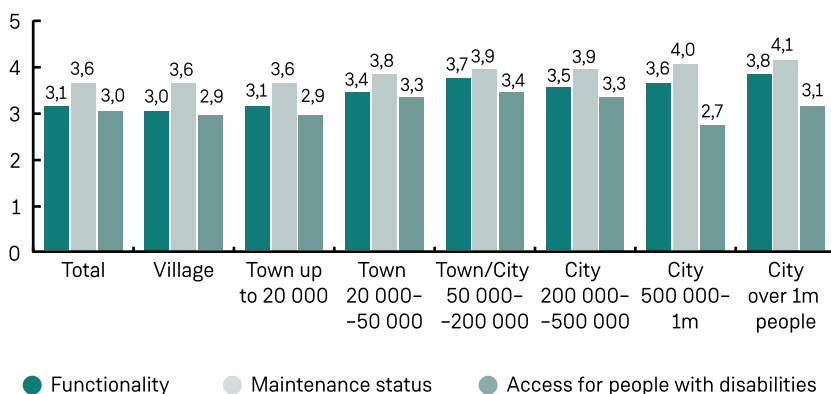
In this text, accessibility is defined in broad terms – not only from the perspective of people using wheelchairs and people with vision or hearing loss, but also those with other special needs such as pregnant women, parents with children, and seniors¹, as well as people who have difficult access to culture due to their place of residence or sociocultural environment.

1 Cf. K. Kowalski, *Włącznik. Projektowanie bez barier* [Inclusion On. Barrier-free design], <http://www.integracja.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Wlacznik-projektowanie-bez-barier-2018.pdf> [accessed: 26 July 2021].

ACCESSIBILITY ASSESSMENT: INFRASTRUCTURE OF COMMUNITY CENTRES

The subject matter addressed in the study was complex. Accessibility was studied to a limited degree, primarily in terms of infrastructural accommodations. The adaptation level of community centres to the needs of people with disabilities was assessed by respondents as moderate – in most cases as lower than the overall functionality of the building and its maintenance status. On average, their accommodation was assessed the highest in urban areas with a population of 50 000–200 000 and the lowest in large cities with a population of 500 000–1 000 000. Although a general trend was revealed indicating that the assessment of the maintenance status of buildings increases with the number of inhabitants, no similar trend was found in the case of the accommodation of infrastructure to the needs of people with disabilities (see Figure: Assessment of the condition of community centre premises based on certain criteria), which may suggest that while improving the overall condition of buildings is a priority for the majority of people who manage them, their accommodation to the needs of people with disabilities is not.

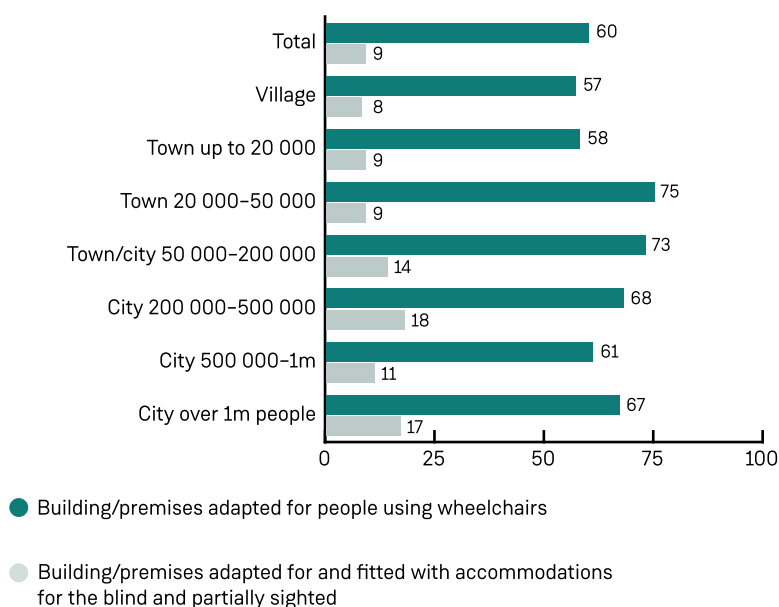
ASSESSMENT OF THE CONDITION OF COMMUNITY CENTRE PREMISES BASED ON SELECTED CRITERIA



Source: National Centre for Culture, 2019, N = 1 076. Question: Q45_1. How do you generally assess the premises at your institution based on the following criteria: functionality, maintenance status, access for people with disabilities? Response options: Very good (5), Good (4), Neutral (3), Poor (2), Very poor (1).

The National Census 2011 (the most recent data available) showed that there were 4 698 000 people with disabilities living in Poland. This means that over 12% of Poland's population were likely to require special accommodations in public service buildings.² As a result, the lack of appropriate conditions may be a barrier not only for people with special needs but also for the development and socialisation of community centres inadequately adapted to serve a certain part of the local community.

THE ADAPTATION OF BUILDINGS TO THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE WITH DIFFERENT TYPES OF DISABILITIES BY LOCALITY SIZE (IN %)



Source: National Centre for Culture, 2019, N = 1 076. Question: Q44. Please specify if your institution has: a building/premises adapted for people using wheelchairs; a building/premises adapted for and fitted with accommodations for the blind and partially sighted.

The study indicates that the implementation of the necessary accommodations in community centres was an uneven process: it was much more effective in the case of physical disabilities than, for example, the blind or partially sighted. The percentage of facilities adapted for people

2 Cf. National Census of Population and Housing 2011, https://stat.gov.pl/cps/rde/xbcr/gus/lud_raport_z_wynikow_NSP2011.pdf [accessed: 26 July 2021].

with physical disabilities was found to be the highest (75%) in towns with a population of 20 000–50 000 and larger towns/cities of 50 000–200 000 (73%). The lowest level was observed in villages (57%) and in towns of up to 20 000 people (58%). Accommodations for the blind and partially sighted were more often implemented in towns/cities with more than 50 000 inhabitants compared to villages and smaller towns; however, these figures were much lower compared to the percentage of institutions adapted for people with physical disabilities, and they did not exceed 18%.

THE GRANT PROGRAMME *KULTURA DOSTĘPNA*

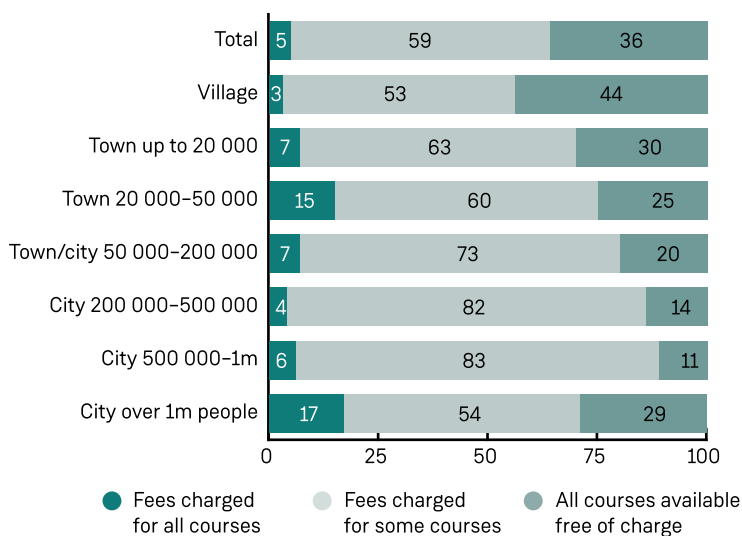
In addition to infrastructural modernisation, cultural communities implemented ‘soft’ activities to foster social integration and facilitate access to cultural activities for people with disabilities. One example of such practices is the *Kultura Dostępna* (‘Accessible Culture’) grant programme that supports the organisation of free cultural events to promote social integration. It provides funding to projects that enable people with difficult access to culture to participate in cultural activities free of charge, including those held outside the institution whose infrastructure could otherwise constitute a barrier for some people interested in a given cultural event.

One must realise the financial conditions in which community centres operate to better understand the benefits of participation in the programme. To increase their financial reserves, institutions adopt a variety of strategies. Some negotiate the amount of the institutional subsidy with the organiser, others charge fees for participation in courses or concerts, while others apply for external subsidies or patronage of other institutions.³ Based on the survey, it can be concluded that a significant proportion of community centres charge fees for participation in courses. The percentage of institutions organising only paid courses was relatively high in towns with a population of 20 000–50 000 and in Warsaw, Poland’s only city with a population exceeding 1 million. The situation was different in towns of up to 20 000 inhabitants, where the offer of as many as 30% of community centres was available entirely free of charge. This percentage

3 Cf. R. Wiśniewski, G. Pol, R. Pląsek, A. Bąk, *Oswajając zmienność. Kultura lokalna z perspektywy domów kultury* [Taming volatility. Local culture from the perspective of community centres], Warsaw 2021.

was even higher in villages and reached 44%. An otherwise rather clear trend, where the percentage of community centres with an entirely free offer decreases as the size of the town/city increases, does not apply to Poland's largest city. The offer of Warsaw's cultural community in this respect is the most polarised. Here, on the one hand, the percentage of community centres offering only paid courses is the highest; on the other, the percentage of those with a fully free offer is also quite high. The institution's fee strategy seems to be dictated by the demand for what it has to offer to the local community. This phenomenon is analysed in greater detail in *Taming volatility. Local culture from the perspective of community centres*.

COMMUNITY CENTRES CHARGING PARTICIPANT FEES (IN %)

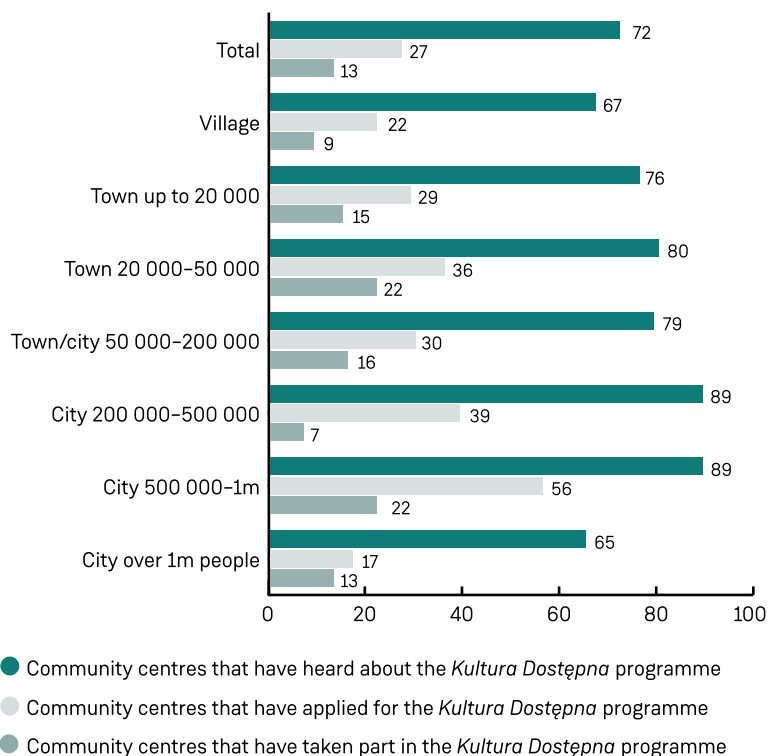


Source: National Centre for Culture, 2019, N = 1 076. Question: Q31. Does your community centre charge a participant fee?

Given that the community centres participating in the study mostly charged a fee for at least part of their activities, the programme supporting free courses allowed many of them to make their cultural offer more accessible. Respondents were asked whether they had heard about the *Kultura Dostępna* programme, whether they had applied for its funding, and whether they had ever obtained the funding. Interestingly, the programme recognition levels were the lowest in Warsaw, where the applica-

tion effectiveness was also the highest. This may suggest the relatively low demand for this type of activity in Warsaw's community centres or its satisfaction by other entities offering similar services (mainly in the third sector), rather than the unfamiliarity of community centre managers with the programme.

COMMUNITY CENTRES PARTICIPATING IN THE *KULTURA DOSTĘPNA* PROGRAMME (IN %)



Source: National Centre for Culture, 2019, N = 1 076. Question: Q57. Have you heard about the following initiatives of the National Centre for Culture?; Q58. Have you ever applied for this programme/project?; Q59. Have you ever taken part in this project/programme?

The greatest interest in the programme (defined both as its recognition and application for it) was observed in several large cities (the capital cities of voivodeships). The revealed disproportions in activities seem to correspond with the diversified admission fee policy of community centres. One of its manifestations is the great interest in the 'Accessible

Culture' programme in cities with a population of 200 000–1 million, where only a minuscule percentage of institutions opted for an either entirely free or entirely paid offer, with most adopting a mixed strategy.

SUMMARY

Architectural accessibility, which tends to be associated with people using wheelchairs, in fact serves everyone, making it easier to move around for people with physical disabilities, parents with children, the elderly, and cyclists. Problems with the proper adaptation of the infrastructure of community centres is manifold, originating from the budget, history, administration, and sometimes the mentality of individual people. Accommodations in institutions are sometimes hindered due to the historical value of buildings supervised by the office of monument protection. Any modification to such sites generates high costs and takes a lot of time.

Based on the responses of community centres, their adaptation to the needs of people with disabilities was generally assessed as lower than the overall functionality of the buildings and their maintenance status. The ongoing modernisation of infrastructure usually applies, in the first place, to changes dedicated to people with physical disabilities, with other types of accommodation introduced less frequently. However, it should be highlighted that infrastructural accommodations account only for part of the activities implemented by community centres to promote social integration. Another element is the fee policy, with institutions focused on organising events free of charge and participating in grant programmes allowing them to make their offer more accessible. An example of the latter is the noticeable participation of community centres in the ministerial programme *Kultura Dostępna* that promotes free tasks addressed to, among others, the elderly or people with disabilities.



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3.

**DIMENSIONS
OF ACCESSIBILITY
AND THE OPERATION
OF CULTURAL
INSTITUTIONS**

THE STATE ARCHIVES IN POLAND AND THE PROMOTION OF ACCESS TO ARCHIVAL SOURCES

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The mission of the network of State Archives is to preserve the Polish documentation heritage for future generations and enable the widest possible access to it for all interested parties, regardless of age, professional qualifications, social position, or origin. Restrictions on access to archival material may be based only on existing legal regulations (e.g. regarding personal data protection) or the poor condition of the documentation. Article 16a, section 1 of the Act of 14 July 1983 on national archival resources and archives introduces the egalitarian principle: 'Everyone has the right to access archival material'.¹ For years, compliance with this statutory obligation has been at the core of actions taken by successive General Directors of the State Archives of Poland responsible for the network of State Archives. In the *Strategy of the State Archives for 2010–2020*, provisions on 'ensuring a friendly, continuous and safe access, at any place and time, to the information stored in the archives to every citizen' and 'making citizens aware of the importance of

1 Act of 14 July 1983 on national archival resources and archives (Journal of Laws 2019, item 553), Online Database of Polish Legislation (in Polish: *Internetowy System Aktów Prawnych*, ISAP), <http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU20190000553> [accessed: 29 July 2021].

archival resources and the possibility of their comprehensive use' occupy an important place.²

The current network of the State Archives consists of 33 institutions, including three central archives located in Warsaw (The Central Archives of Historical Records, The Archives of Modern Records, The National Digital Archives) and 30 regional archives. In addition, the respective State Archives feature a total of 39 field offices and three branch offices. The institutions are spread all over Poland. Users can find them both in large cities such as Warsaw, Kraków, Gdańsk and Wrocław, and in smaller cities and towns, e.g. Leszno, Kalisz, Otwock and Nowy Sącz. The number of archival resources stored in the State Archives is considerable. At the end of 2020, it amounted to over 43 million items (books, folders, volumes) – an equivalent of over 360 km of files. They also included documents produced in electronic format – altogether 231 128 files of a total size of 42 450.88 GB.³ This collection of historical resources comprises unique material, from the Middle Ages to modern times, that is of key importance to the Polish state and its citizens. Among the resources are documents fundamental to the history of Poland, well known from textbooks (e.g. the Act of the Union of Lublin of 1569, the Constitution of 3 May 1791), and many other priceless sources documenting centuries of political, economic and scientific life and other areas of human activity.

Users have many opportunities to interact with resources stored in the archives. The basic form of the classically defined access to archival materials is through direct contact with the documents. This can be done in person by visiting the reading room of a given archive, or indirectly by ordering the archive to search for specific information. The archives are also institutions of public trust and can therefore issue the official confirmation of records of knowledge or acts of will stored as secondary documents – copies, certificates, certified copies – which can be required in court and other official proceedings. An important form of making the

2 *The Strategy of the State Archives for 2010–2020*, Appendix to Communication No. 1/2020 of the General Director of the State Archives of 23 December 2010, <https://www.archiwa.gov.pl/pl/o-nas/strategia-archiwów-państwowych> [accessed: 29 July 2020].

3 *Report on the activity of the State Archives in 2020*, The State Archives Head Office, Warsaw 2021, https://www.archiwa.gov.pl/files/SPRAWOZDANIE_AP_2020.pdf [accessed: 29 July 2021].

archival material more accessible is through publications of selected historical sources as well as exhibitions and document presentations.⁴

In 2020 and the first half of 2021, forms of access to the State Archives were significantly affected by the pandemic restrictions. The reading rooms of the State Archives were periodically closed. Whenever they resumed their activity, it was largely limited, with the number of visitors simultaneously allowed in a room adapted to the current recommendations. As a result, more emphasis was placed on sharing documents online, primarily on the Search the Archives website, and the promotion of this form of access.⁵ Compared to 2019, the data from 2020 and 2021 shows a clear decrease in the number of direct visits to the reading rooms, and thus a significantly smaller number of archival items accessed by users.⁶ Detailed data is presented in the table below.

THE ACCESSIBILITY OF RESOURCES IN THE READING ROOMS OF THE STATE ARCHIVES

	2019	2020	JAN-JUN 2021
Number of users	26 292	11 618	No data
Number of visits	71 599	27 481	10 739
Number of archival items provided	728 486	288 873	136 709

Source: *Report on the activity of the General Director of the State Archives and on the state archives in 2019*; *Report on the activity of the State Archives in 2020*; The State Archives Head Office, own data.

The data confirms the significant impact of the pandemic on users' attendance at our reading rooms. The number of people who used this

- 4 D. Grot, *Ku przeszłości otwartej. Dostępność archiwów państwowych w Polsce w latach 1918–2014* [Towards an open past. Accessibility of state archives in Poland in 1918–2014], Warsaw 2015, pp. 54–57.
- 5 Cf. G. Mędykowski, *The State Archives during the pandemic*, 'Polish Culture Yearbook' 2020, pp. 44–49.
- 6 *Report on the activity of the General Director of the State Archives and on the state archives in 2019*, The State Archives Head Office, Warsaw 2020, https://www.archiwa.gov.pl/files/sprawozdanie_2019.pdf [accessed: 29 July 2021].

form of access decreased by 14 674, i.e. by as much as 56% of all users. Similarly, the total number of visits to reading rooms between 2019 and 2020 dropped by 44 118, which translates into approx. 62% fewer visits.

Indirect access, i.e. queries ordered by and conducted on behalf of users, presented slightly differently. In the analysed period, this form of access maintained a stable level in the ordered searches for source materials, as shown by the table below.

QUERIES IN THE STATE ARCHIVES

	2019	2020	JAN-JUN 2021
Number of queries	69 798	70 528	42 873

Source: *Report on the activity of the General Director of the State Archives and on the state archives in 2019*; *Report on the activity of the State Archives in 2020*; The State Archives Head Office, own data.

The years 2019 and 2020 can also be compared in terms of the subject of queries which reveals certain trends in user interests. In 2019, as many as 38% of queries concerned genealogy, 24% – property and ownership, 17% – social matters, 3% – science, and 18% were classified as ‘other’.⁷ In 2020, as many as 43% of all queries referred to genealogy, 21% – property and ownership, 14% – social matters, 4% – science, and 18% were classified as ‘other’.⁸ This data confirms the continuation of a trend from recent years – a change in the type of users and their searches. The State Archives and their resources have ceased to be an object of interest mainly of the scientific community and have opened up to new groups of users. Currently, most of the ordered searches are related to genealogy and cases of property and ownership. During the period of limitations on access and direct visits to reading rooms during the pandemic, the number of scientific queries slightly increased.

The basic tool for making archival resources available online is the Search the Archives website offering descriptions and scans of archival

7 Ibid.

8 *Report on the activity of the State Archives in 2020*, The State Archives Head Office, Warsaw 2021, https://www.archiwa.gov.pl/files/SPRAWOZDANIE_AP_2020.pdf [accessed: 29 July 2021].

records from the entire network of the State Archives and other institutions storing archival material. At the end of 2020, the website included 13 800 012 descriptions of archival records and 44 608 644 scans of documents from 69 institutions. The State Archives are successively publishing new descriptions and digital copies, and these numbers will continue to increase throughout 2021. In addition to the network of the State Archives and memorial institutions all over Poland, the website provides information on sources pertaining to Poland's history collected in the archives of the Polish diaspora (e.g. the Archives of Polish Catholic Missions in France and Switzerland, the Central Archives of the American Polonia in Orchard Lake, the Pontifical Institute of Ecclesiastical Studies in Rome, and the Polish Music Centre in Los Angeles).

The website was modernised and launched anew on 8 June 2019 to celebrate the International Day of Archives, at a new address: szukajwarchiwach.gov.pl (Search the Archives). The older version of szukajwarchiwach.pl was still available, but without updates, until 31 May 2021. The number of online users of the archives is steadily growing. In 2019, the szukajwarchiwach.pl website was visited by approx. 761 000 people, and szukajwarchiwach.gov.pl by 304 000. In 2020, there were 786 756 users of szukajwarchiwach.gov.pl alone, and 16 495 090 views of the new Search the Archives website. In the first half of 2021, the number of views was as high as 21 526 945, which confirms a clear upward trend. However, its actual scale can only be assessed once we have all the data for 2021.

Increased user interest in the service is associated with a growing number of resources published as digital copies. At the end of 2019, a total of 38 397 500 files were available for viewing and downloading, and by the end of 2020 this number increased to 44 608 644 (approx. 14% more than in the previous year).

The resources of the State Archives are also presented as part of international initiatives. One of them is the Archives Portal Europe, developed with the contribution of Polish archivists, which presents the most important historical resources from the European Union (EU) member states.⁹ The State Archives have shared over 3 million descriptive data

9 See: Archives Portal Europe, <https://www.archivesportaleurope.net/pl> [accessed: 29 July 2021].

and nearly 1.5 million digital items with the portal, ranking fifth among more than 30 European portal partners.¹⁰

These figures can hardly reflect all activities undertaken with the aim to ensure free access to historical resources for all interested parties. All components of the archives' activity, such as the collection, storing, processing, conservation, sharing and popularisation of resources, are interconnected. Without the proper processing, preparation and conservation, documents cannot be digitised, published as online copies, or provided to users in reading rooms.

Educational and popularisation activities play an important role in improving access to archival resources. The State Archives across Poland are developing their offer in this area, addressed both to professional researchers, history lovers and user groups of various ages, including young people. Despite the pandemic restrictions, 150 traditional and more than 750 virtual exhibitions were organised in 2020. The latter number is particularly impressive compared to 343 online exhibitions in 2019. This shows that the State Archives can adapt to the current conditions, seeking to reach users in every possible way.

Very popular are our archival lessons addressed to students of different school levels and adapted to their needs. Visits to the State Archives provide a unique opportunity to help young people learn more about their local history and historical sources that illustrate it. Meeting the interests of different user groups, showing them our rich archival resources and their study potential attracts new users to the archives. Particularly noteworthy are two projects implemented in recent years: 'The Family Archives of Independence'¹¹ and 'The Pandemic Archive'.¹² The former

10 For more information see: A. Krochmal, *Archiwa zjednoczonej Europy w świetle projektu APEX* [Archives of the united Europe in the light of the APEX project], [in:] *Archiwa Polski i Europy – wspólne dziedzictwo, różne doświadczenia* [Archives of Poland and Europe: Common heritage, various experiences], A. Kulecka (Ed.), Warsaw 2017, pp. 35–43.

11 'The Family Archives of Independence' (in Polish: *Archiwa Rodzinne Niepodległej*), <https://archiwarodzinne.gov.pl/> [accessed: 29 July 2021].

12 See B. Żelazek, *Archiwa Państwowe w obliczu pandemii wywołanej koronawirusem SARS-CoV-2: Archiwum Pandemii* [The State Archives in the face of the pandemic caused by the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus: The Pandemic Archive], *Więś i Rolnictwo* 2020, No. 3(188), pp. 205–221.

was to raise public awareness of family souvenirs and emphasise the role of generally little-known people who helped Poland in regaining its independence. As part of the project, the State Archives launched consultation points on how to manage family archives, prepared a guide for family archivists, and organised workshops and exhibitions. Priceless family collections were donated to the archives, enriching the Polish archival heritage. The 2020 action was summarised in the nationwide exhibition 'Family Archives of Independence. A collective portrait of families in the Second Polish Republic'. The aim of the latter project ('The Pandemic Archive') has been to document everyday life during the pandemic and the changes induced by the pandemic. In 2020 alone, nearly 200 users (individuals, companies, institutions) donated over 5 000 photos, videos, drawings, leaflets, announcements, and other documents related to life in the pandemic. As a result, the archives have gained new source material that can be made available both online and in reading rooms.

For many years, the aim of the State Archives has been to open up to different groups of users and make the archival collections as available as possible. Given the reduced number of users in reading rooms, a trend further exacerbated by the pandemic and the restrictions related to it, a significant portion of the document accessibility process has been transferred to the Internet. The Search the Archives website offers access to both digital copies of archival resources and a list of records physically available in a specific archive. As a result, users can conduct their own studies of the cultural objects stored in the network of the State Archives all over Poland.

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- 'The Family Archives of Independence' (in Polish: *Archiwa Rodzinne Niepodległej*), The State Archives Head Office, <https://archiwarodzinne.gov.pl/> [accessed: 29 July 2021].
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- Act of 14 July 1983 on national archival resources and archives (Journal of Laws 2019, item 553), Online Database of Polish Legislation (in Polish: *Internetowy System Aktów Prawnych*, ISAP), <http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU20190000553> [accessed: 29 July 2021].
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THE NATIONAL LIBRARY ONLINE AND IN READING ROOMS. THE INCREASING ACCESSIBILITY OF COLLECTIONS

National Library of Poland

The National Library is the central library of Poland responsible for acquiring, storing and the permanent archiving of the intellectual output created in Polish or by Poles, both in historical Polish territories and abroad. Until 2006, the Library's collections could only be viewed in the Library's reading rooms. Since that year, they have also been shared digitally, which has undoubtedly increased the accessibility of the resources. This text outlines the Library's efforts to further improve accessibility in 2020 and the first half of 2021.

The announcement of the state of epidemic emergency in Poland on 14 March 2020 and the subsequent introduction of restrictions in cultural institutions resulted in immediate action focused primarily on ensuring the safety of readers and employees. First, they included the temporary closing of reading rooms and, at later stages, limiting the number of reader stations, social distancing, and breaks for airing the reading rooms. Consequently, the accessibility of our resources was reduced. For this reason, a parallel action plan was developed to expand access to collections online.

This article presents various dimensions and conditions of improved accessibility to the Library's collections in the difficult time of the pandemic alongside the modernisation of the reading rooms. The operation of a modern hybrid library largely depends on the availability and use of mod-

ern information and communication technologies. However, a library that is to be accessible to people with special needs must cover several dimensions. It does not seem unjustified to say that nowadays no library, even when located in a building that complies with the highest standards of universal design, can be recognised as fully accessible if its website is not adapted for people using assistive software. The same applies to a library with a well-developed website but without accessible infrastructure.¹

A TIME OF GREAT RECONSTRUCTION

Dominating among the greenery of Warsaw's Pole Mokotowskie Park, the Main Building of the National Library, originally designed in the 1960s, was erected between 1977 and the late 1980s. The construction consists of three integrated functional parts: the Office Building (marked in architectural designs as Buildings B and B1, which spatially constitute a unit), the Warehouse Building (C), and Reading Rooms (A).

On 10 August 2018, construction works were launched that will radically change the National Library.² A modern open and barrier-free interior

- 1 T. Makowski, *The National Library of Poland during the Coronavirus Pandemic: A Brief History of the First Nine Months of the State of Emergency*, *Przegląd Biblioteczny/The Library Review* 2020, Special Issue, pp. 39–56, http://czasopisma.sbp.pl/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/PB_special_2020.pdf [accessed: 25 July 2021].
- 2 Stage II of the modernisation works comprises two tasks: 1. Construction works, 2. Equipment and interior furnishing as part of the project 'Modernisation of the reading rooms and public spaces of the National Library, implemented pursuant to the signed Funding Agreement No. POIS.08.01.00-14-0003/16-00 with the Ministry of Culture, National Heritage and Sport (Intermediate Body) under the Operational Programme Infrastructure and Environment 2014–2020, Measure 8.1, Priority Axis VIII: Protection of Cultural Heritage and Development of Cultural Resources'. The modernisation is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2021. Given the modernisation of the architectural infrastructure, the space of over 10 000 m² in the National Library's buildings, where cultural, scientific and educational activities are normally conducted, is temporarily excluded from use. During the particularly challenging period of the epidemic emergency, this also meant the concentration of a significant part of the Library's basic tasks in the Office Building.

ensuring the independence of people using wheelchairs and people with other mobility impairments features a comfortable spatial layout for different groups of people with special needs in terms of access to knowledge and information. Readers will benefit from increased accessibility which will include: larger numbers of free-access resources, including improved digital access in the reading rooms; adapted interior furnishing such as adjusted desk height in places intended for work and reader service, accessible passages in zones with bookshelves and places for readers, a visual and tactile information system dedicated to users with impaired vision³; access to resting places such as an open patio, of particular benefit for seniors and people with health issues requiring energy conservation (e.g. respiratory and circulatory system diseases, cancer); reduced energy consumption and, in particular, improved air quality through the modernisation of the thermal insulation and ventilation systems⁴; adequate artificial lighting and daylight from panoramic windows in a significant part of the space, with the Lower Reading Room opening to the patio.⁵ Gradually introduced, the infrastructure changes are among the critical dimensions of the Library's improved accessibility.⁶ On 7 August

- 3 Contrasting information boards with Braille markings and tactile floor and reading room plans.
- 4 Stage I of the modernisation works comprises the task 'Modernisation of the mechanical ventilation system – installation of the mechanical supply and exhaust ventilation system with heat recovery', as part of the project 'Energy modernisation in Buildings A of the National Library at al. Niepodległości 213 in Warsaw, implemented pursuant to the signed Funding Agreement No. POIS.01.03.01-00-0057/16-00 with the National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management under the Operational Programme Infrastructure and Environment 2014–2020, Sub-measure 1.3.1; Priority Axis I: Low-Emission Economy'.
- 5 An impressive enlargement of the modernised interior achieved by adding Level -1 with stairs and a lift adapted for people with disabilities. The daylight from the panoramic windows to the patio optically enlarges and changes what used to be a hall with hidden side corridors into a spacious, bright space, with an easy-to-navigate and user-friendly perspective from the entrance, accessible reading rooms, front desk, and information system.
- 6 In recent years, the office building has been fitted with solutions that provide barrier-free routes, both vertically and horizontally. In 2011, four pas-

2020, construction works began in the historical Krasiński Palace (Palace of the Commonwealth). One of the objectives is to improve the accessibility of cultural events organised in the Palace.⁷

READER SERVICE

Services are an important element in the Library's accessibility. Since 2010, the National Library has conducted employee training in the provision of services to people with disabilities and other readers with special needs. Our original training programmes include: fundamental knowledge about people with disabilities and other people with special needs; workshops on communication skills in contact with people with disabilities; skills necessary to resolve difficult and conflict situations; disability management in a team; and training courses for website editors in preparing accessible content. The employees who have the most interactions with readers due to the nature of their work (e.g. those working in the Collection Accessibility Department) are trained in the first place. Since 2014, training in the listed areas has been part of the mandatory initial training for newly employed Security Guards.⁸

senger lifts adapted for people with disabilities, with Braille markings and sound messages, were installed. In addition, one of the ground floor toilets was adapted to the needs of people with disabilities.

- 7 Construction and installation works in the historical building of the National Library as part of the task 'Energy modernisation of the Krasiński Palace (Palace of the Commonwealth) at 3/5 Krasiński Square in Warsaw' pursuant to the signed Funding Agreement No. POIS.01.03.01-00-0002/17-00 with the National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management under the Operational Programme Infrastructure and Environment 2014-2020, Priority Axis I: Low-Emission Economy, Measure 1.3: Promoting energy efficiency in buildings, Sub-measure 1.3.1: Promoting energy efficiency in public service buildings. The work is planned to be completed by 1 August 2022.
- 8 The Library's employees trained in assisting and communicating with persons with disabilities and other people with special needs account for approx. 30% of all our staff. Source: M. Żejmis, based on the documentation and notes from the training courses.

During the state of epidemic emergency, some training courses were not conducted due to the limited possibility of organising workshops on communication with people with disabilities, which require direct contact between the participants and the coach. However, the training courses of newly employed Security Guards have been continued uninterruptedly as individual workshops.⁹

ACCESSIBILITY IN TERMS OF SAFETY AND SECURITY

The combination of modernisation work and a pandemic is a rare coincidence in the history of the National Library. In terms of accessibility, additional meaning has been assigned to safety and security. Despite the current extraordinary circumstances, the Library continues to ensure evacuation options for people with special needs. Applicable procedures have been adapted to infrastructure changes and consulted with an accessibility expert.¹⁰ Heads of organisational units appoint evacuation assistants for people with reduced mobility. The Office of Employee Affairs, a unit in charge of the Library's availability based on reports from the heads of organisational units, compiles and updates a list of employees who choose to report their reduced mobility and presence in our building during specific hours. In general access spaces, e.g. in temporary reading

- 9 During the state of epidemic emergency, the training courses *Persons with disabilities in libraries and other cultural institutions*, addressed to external entities, were also discontinued due to insufficient numbers of applicants replying to the training advertisements posted by the Department of Librarian Education. Before 2020, these training courses were attended by employees of local libraries and other institutions.
- 10 Applicable procedures define 'persons with reduced mobility' who, in the event of evacuation, are unable to leave the buildings on their own, quickly and efficiently (people with varied degrees and types of disabilities, persons with temporary injuries, women in advanced pregnancy, seniors, etc.). These procedures apply to the Library's employees (who are regularly in the buildings) and temporary visitors (readers, customers, guests). *Regulations for the Evacuation of Persons with Reduced Mobility* – Appendix 8, section 5 to the *Fire Safety Instructions for Buildings at al. Niepodległości 213 in Warsaw*.

rooms, assistance is provided by evacuation coordinators or other Library employees appointed by such coordinators. Barrier-free horizontal escape routes, fully accessible to people with special needs, have been designated. Visual evacuation information and lighting is provided for people with hearing loss. Emergency exits are marked on layout plans with tactile information prepared in modernised reading rooms.

A new fire alarm system with optical and acoustic siren devices, a smoke protection system for staircases, and new fire separations in the form of fire doors EIS30 have been in operation since 2016. The new fire protection systems have significantly increased the safety of all people in the Library's buildings. In the event of a fire, staircases provide for safe vertical escape routes.¹¹

BETWEEN MODERNISATION AND THE PANDEMIC: ACCESSIBILITY CONDITIONS FOR COLLECTIONS IN READING ROOMS

The Collection Access Point for Persons with Disabilities has operated in the National Library for 10 years. It offers computer stations with scanners, OCR software for converting text images into sound software (text-to-speech), Braille rulers, desktop magnifiers, handheld portable magnifiers with colour, magnification and matrix parameters, monitors with desktop magnifier functionality, and an induction loop for communication with and access to information for people with hearing impairment and those with multiple disabilities (e.g. deaf-blind people).

The induction loop settings at the computer station were consulted with the Library's employees – people with partial hearing loss. Computer stations and other equipment of the Access Point are distributed across reading rooms. During the modernisation, their location has been changed several times depending on room accessibility.

- 11 Using the designated routes, people with special needs are not exposed to smoke or volatile combustion products. People with reduced mobility can use staircases as escape routes from the upper floors to the ground floor (the route from the staircases to the exit from the building is entirely fire protected) or, if necessary, can use them as a safe place to wait for help.

The Library's users are a highly diverse group with even more diverse objectives. Many of them are people who need access to collections for research or other professional activity.¹² Readers are not verified in terms of health or disability. The Library's regulations specify how to use the Access Point equipment and adapted computer stations. During the state of epidemic, users must book a place in the reading room. As a result, more people inform us beforehand that they require assistance in accessing the collections due to disability or age. Before the pandemic, readers with special needs would typically show up in the Library without announcing their visit. The blind and people with visual impairment can call us to ask questions on the phone.

People with sensory impairments, using the adapted computer stations, magnifiers and induction loop at the Access Point, can, independently or with the support of the Library's dedicated employees, gain access to printed materials. The Library also offers collections in formats accessible to people with print-reading disabilities.

The collections available on-site in the reading rooms include 11 011 audiobook titles¹³, 645 recorded fairy tales (with words and music)¹⁴, 496 broadcasts, and 584 radio plays.¹⁵ Since the commencement of the mod-

12 Pursuant to §20 of the Statute of the National Library, the Library is open to people using its collections for the purposes of scientific research, cultural activities, artistic work, professional work, education and training. The Statute of the National Library introduced by Regulation No. 21 of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage of 30 July 2007 on the Statute to the National Library, with subsequent amendments. Cf. <https://www.bn.org.pl/o-nas/statut> [accessed: 23 July 2021].

13 Data as of 28 July 2021. In the past five years, the number of titles has almost tripled. As of 16 May 2016, there were 3 637 titles. The overall number of the records is higher because some publications come in a box of several CDs or tapes.

14 Data as of 28 July 2021.

15 See the footnote above. Most of them are Polish Radio broadcasts on various topics; however, the National Library also has recordings of the underground broadcasts from the People's Republic of Poland (e.g. Radio Solidarność), London broadcasts in Polish from the Second World War, and F.D. Roosevelt's Address on the Yalta Conference. Some collections are available on gramophone records. In addition to radio broadcasts and radio

ernisation, all these items have been available in the Reading Room of the Sound and Audio-Visual Records, with their accessibility limited in 2020 due to the pandemic.

A significant limitation of the Library's accessibility due to construction works came with the temporary exclusion from use of the Main Building entrance suitable for people using wheelchairs. This created a unique situation that tested the functionality of this building – beautiful but dating back to the late 17th century. Some stations for people with disabilities had to be moved to the Palace of the Commonwealth. Until the commencement of the construction works in the Palace, people using wheelchairs who accessed the collections and scientific information on the spot, i.e. in the traditional way, could attend the Palace at Krasiński Square¹⁶ as an alternative to the Main Building.

THE DIGITAL WAVE OF INCREASING COLLECTION ACCESSIBILITY

Given its wide range of activities, the National Library maintains several dozen websites on different topics and for various purposes. Audits conducted in recent years by teams of internal and external experts revealed and eliminated structural errors in the websites, increasing their accessibility.¹⁷ Declarations of accessibility apply to our most important web-

plays, the Library offers recorded fairy tales with a unique voice-over cast, e.g. *Little Red Riding Hood – A Scene* and *Pan kotek był chory* [Mr. Cat Was Ill] (B. Hertz, A. Wiliński) – a radio play, a copy of the recording issued by Syrena-Electro in 1933, produced by a Polish radio station in the United States; *O krasnoludkach i o sierotce Marysi: baśń muzyczna* [The Brownie Scouts: A Musical Fairy Tale] based on Maria Konopnicka's book, adapted by J. Gillowa, W. Opalek, music by R. Sielicki.

- 16 This was possible because of the previous changes in the infrastructure of the Palace of the Commonwealth ensuring the accessibility of all floors (a lift adapted for persons with disabilities), the adaptation of the toilets, and a stair lift installed at the entrance.
- 17 According to an audit of the most important selected websites, conducted in September–November 2019 on behalf of the National Library by an external team of experts, the website accessibility and compliance with WCAG 2.1 was assessed as high (AA).

sites.¹⁸ The planned updates include changes to further eliminate minimal incompatibilities and improve accessibility. Another important aspect is ensuring the accessibility of the published content. Websites are edited in accordance with the Easy-To-Read (ETR) linguistic principles.¹⁹

THE POLONA NATIONAL DIGITAL LIBRARY

As already mentioned, the National Library has digitised its valuable collections and made them available online since 2006. In 2020, the number of users of the POLONA National Digital Library (polona.pl) increased by 51.5% compared to 2019, while the number of page views – by 47%. The portal mainly offers the Library's collections available in the public domain and selected copyrighted works.

Given the amendment of the National Reading Development Programme and the establishment of Priority 4, funding has been provided for providing access to digital resources on a larger scale, not only as files in open TIF, JPG and PDF formats but also as e-books, along with the development of thematic and original collections on polona.pl. An extremely important achievement was the large-scale acquisition of non-exclusive licences for literary works covered by economic copyrights and making them available on polona.pl.²⁰ Furthermore, polona.pl offers audiobook

18 Detailed information on the accessibility status of individual websites can be found in the *Report on the accessibility of public sector bodies*, National Library, March 2021. The PDF file can be downloaded at: <https://www.bn.org.pl/bip/sprawozdawczosc> [accessed: 14 October 2021].

19 Ibid.

20 Upon the consent of the authors or their heirs to grant a licence, users can legally access the works, in their entirety or in part, by the following authors: Stanisław Barańczak, Jacek Bocheński, Ernest Bryll, Tomasz Burk, Leszek Długosz, Stanisław Dygat, Konstanty Ildefons Gałczyński, Pola Gojawiczyńska, Zbigniew Herbert, Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz, Kazimiera Iłakowiczówna, Krzysztof Karasek, Marzanna Kiełar, Stefan Kisielewski, Julian Kornhauser, Urszula Kozioł, Jerzy Kronhold, Ryszard Krynicki, Stanisław Lem, Antoni Libera, Piotr Matywiecki, Marian Pankowski, Joanna Papużyńska, Jan Polkowski, Tadeusz Różewicz, Antoni Słonimski, Julian Strykowski, Jacek Trznadel, and Adam Zagajewski.

files for download, most of which constitute set books for school²¹ recorded in cooperation with the 'Wolne Lektury' project.

In 2020, the network of terminals intended for use in local libraries and offering access to the latest scientific and popular science literature in the Library's collections, protected by copyright, was expanded after the number of libraries associated with the 'Academica' Digital Loans System for Research Publications increased to 1 252. These activities were intensified at the beginning of 2021, with the number of the 'Academica' libraries exceeding 3 000 by the end of June 2021.

In addition to the digitisation planned as part of the Library's core activity, in view of the pandemic restrictions on physical access to collections, the 'Digitisation on Demand' service was introduced on 11 May 2020, with users submitting their digitisation requests. The digitised books and journals are available – depending on their copyright status – at polona.pl or in Academica.

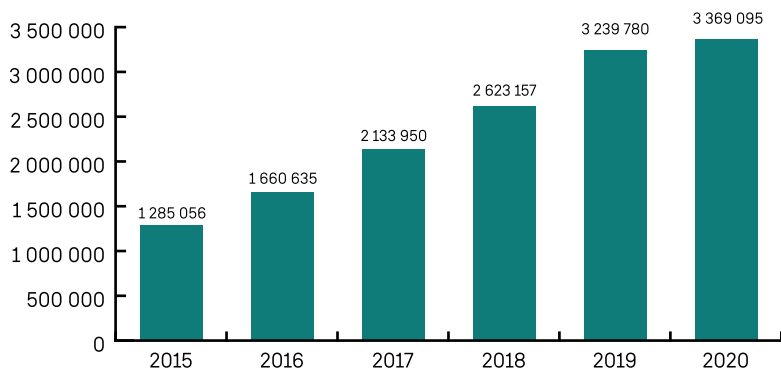
Responding to user needs, the requested digitised items are subjected to Optical Character Recognition (OCR). The resulting PDF files with a text layer can be downloaded. This procedure increases the pool of items with a full-text search option, a functionality particularly appreciated by researchers as well as amateurs interested in genealogy and local history.

When searching for material, users can apply filters such as the place and time of publishing, language of the work, etc. Moreover, users of the digital libraries managed by the National Library do not have to install any additional software, as files are openly available.

Among the items digitised in 2020, there are both those available on the open Internet and those with restricted access due to copyright protection – such items are available on-site in the Library's reading rooms and via the Academica terminals in libraries all over Poland. The constantly rising number of items available online attests to the Library's desire to digitise and publish online all its resources insofar as permitted by the law. Over the past five years, the number of items at polona.pl and in Academica has increased by more than two and a half times.

21 This includes poetry and prose by authors such as Joseph Conrad, Johann Wolfgang Goethe, Homer, Horace, Janusz Korczak, Bolesław Leśmian, Michel de Montaigne, Cyprian Kamil Norwid, Eliza Orzeszkowa, Joanna Papużyńska, Bolesław Prus, Bruno Schulz, Henryk Sienkiewicz, Gabriela Zapolska, and Stefan Żeromski.

NUMBER OF ITEMS AVAILABLE AT POLONA.PL



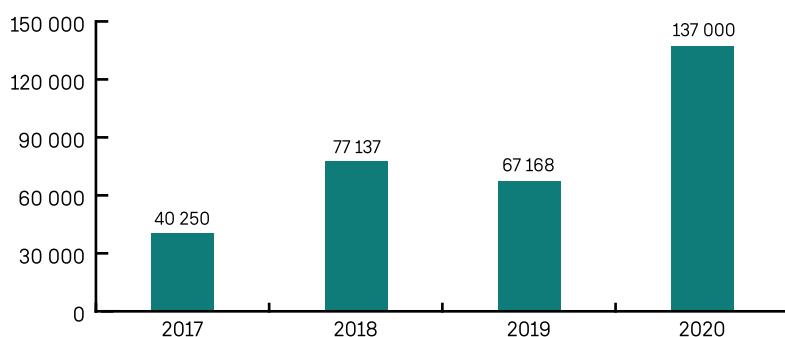
Source: The National Library

The continuing upward trend in both the number of users at polona.pl and in *Academica*, and the number of sessions proves that our response to the needs of readers has been adequate.

The figures show long-term trends in the use of the Library's websites and monthly comparisons in 2018–2021 for polona.pl (with data for the first half of 2021).

Between 2017 and 2020, the number of *Academica* users more than quadrupled.

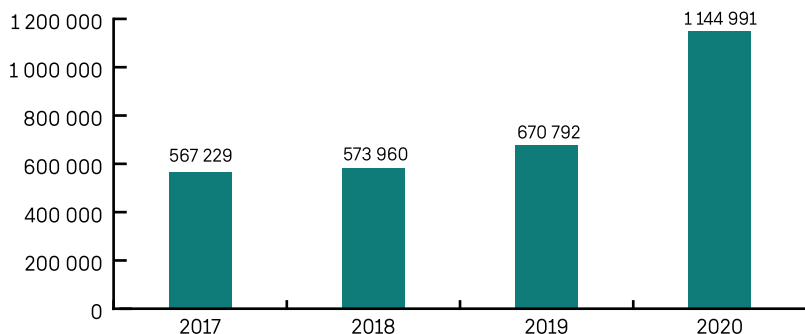
NUMBER OF ACADEMICA USERS



Source: The National Library

Between 2017 and 2020, the number of polona.pl users nearly doubled.

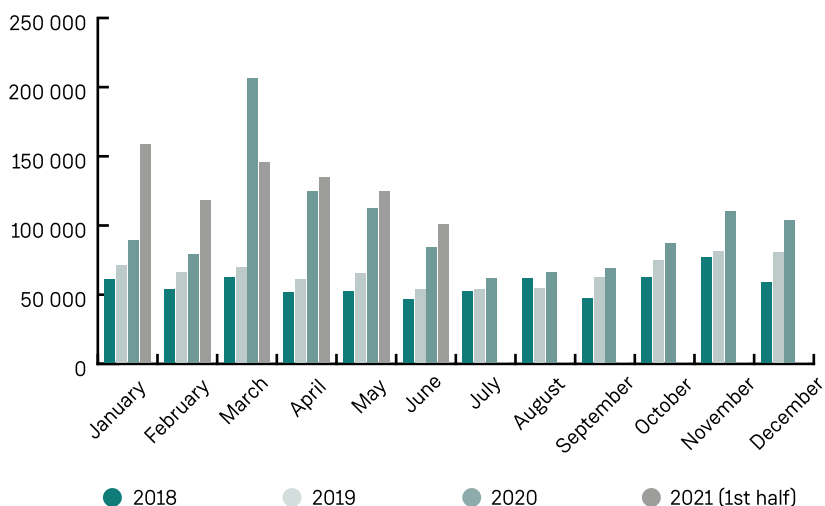
NUMBER OF POLONA.PL USERS



Source: The National Library

The data shows a stable increase in the number of users year by year. A rapid – nearly threefold – increase can be observed in March 2020, when the pandemic restrictions were introduced. The following months indicate that higher user levels were also observed afterwards. This indicates a high user satisfaction rate – perhaps online access has become a ‘new norm’ for people who started using digital libraries only when access to physical collections was limited.

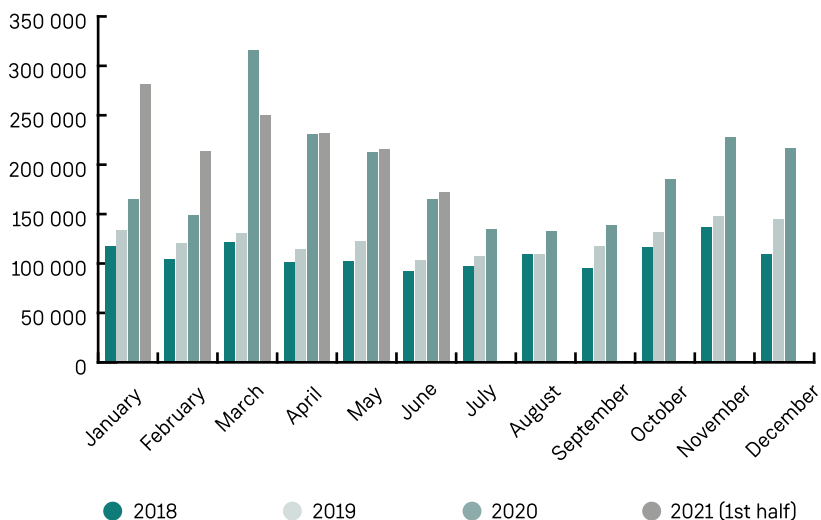
USERS OF POLONA.PL IN 2018–2021



Source: The National Library, analytics.google.com for polona.pl

During the pandemic, twice as many sessions were reported in the subsequent months compared to the pre-pandemic period. The number of sessions in 2021 remains at the same level as in 2020.

SESSIONS ON POLONA.PL IN 2018-2021



Source: The National Library, analytics.google.com for polona.pl

It is worth noting that the rapid increase in the number of users and sessions, coinciding with the coronavirus pandemic restrictions in March 2020, translated into increased interest and use levels for polona.pl also afterwards, with higher numbers of users and sessions persisting until today. This is largely because legal access has been provided to copyrighted works previously unavailable online (through the purchase of applicable licences), making digital items available in new formats (e-books and audiobooks), and because of the swift processing of user requests for digitisation.

In summary, the National Library's long-term digitisation projects, efforts to increase the accessibility of newly acquired digital items, and solutions implemented during the pandemic to enable access to collections despite the closing of public service institutions (including the National Library), have contributed to the increasing optimisation of access

to library resources. In parallel, the ongoing renovation of the Library's infrastructure in reading rooms will result in their improved accessibility for people with special needs.

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LIBRARY ACCESSIBILITY FOR DIFFERENT USER GROUPS, INCLUDING PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

National Library of Poland

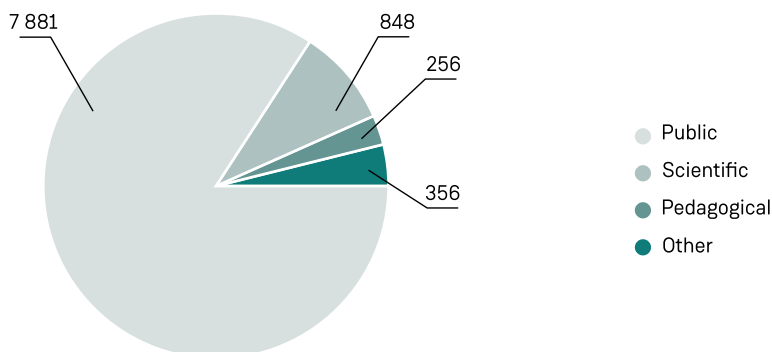
Libraries are generally perceived as places where reading and other materials are collected, stored and made available to users, which most often comes down to lending books. However, their functions are manifold, and their offer must correspond to the diverse needs and expectations of various groups of users, including people with special needs.

Library accessibility can be considered in much broader terms than just through the prism of obligations resulting from the Act of 19 July 2019 on ensuring accessibility for people with special needs (Journal of Laws 2019, item 1696) and the Act of 4 April 2019 on the digital accessibility of websites and mobile applications of public entities (Journal of Laws 2019, item 848). Libraries meet the minimum architectural requirements in this regard; however, their actual accessibility is also determined by factors such as a location convenient for public transport and opening days and hours. The accessibility of book collections and library resources depends not only on the model website and an appropriate interior marking system, but also on the provision of appropriate collections (audiobooks, tactile books, Braille books, etc.), reading devices (e.g. text-to-speech readers), and an online catalogue for an easier search. Equally important is the attitude of librarians towards visitors and their social and communication competences.

The experience of the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, lockdowns and restrictions has accelerated and intensified processes already launched in libraries. With the expansion of the range of services and the introduction of new technical solutions, library collections are becoming more accessible also outside the library premises (the 'Phone Book Requests' service) and working hours. A similar observation can be made with respect to meetings and activities conducted in libraries. Posted online as videos with subtitles, sign language interpretation or audio description, they reach wider audiences, not limited to the original participants who attended the events in the library building. This means that aspects related to the accessibility of library facilities and of library collections and services do not necessarily overlap and should therefore be analysed separately.

This text focuses primarily on public libraries (with references made to scientific and pedagogical libraries) since they form a dense and evenly distributed network, which makes them the most accessible to average users in Poland¹ (Figure: Number of library units by type [libraries and branches] in 2019).

NUMBER OF LIBRARY UNITS BY TYPE (LIBRARIES AND BRANCHES) IN 2019



Source: Statistics Poland, own study

- 1 Scientific and pedagogical libraries are located in larger towns/cities while public libraries operate in all areas (rural, urban-rural, urban) and at all administrative levels (gmina, powiat, voivodeship).

THE ACCESSIBILITY OF LIBRARY BUILDINGS

In the discussion on the adaptation of libraries for people with special needs, one should bear in mind that nearly one quarter (24.1%) of library buildings and premises were built before 1945, 57.7% in 1945–1989, every fifth (18.4%) after 1989, and every tenth is listed in the Register of Monuments (9.6%).² As new libraries are opened and those currently in use are renovated and modernised, the number of adapted facilities is increasing. Scientific libraries (78%) and pedagogical libraries (53%) rank the highest in this respect (Table: Libraries adapted for users with special needs in 2015–2019). The largest number of institutions still awaiting architectural adaptation can be found among public libraries. In 2019, a total of 46% of them underwent the necessary architectural accommodation (of which 58% were in urban areas and 39% in rural areas). This figure can be explained by differences in library network density – public libraries (including branches) are ten times more represented than scientific libraries and over 30 times more than pedagogical ones. Between 2015 and 2019, the number of public libraries featuring wheelchair ramps increased by 430, while the architectural accommodation of the interior was carried out in 336 facilities (Table: Number of library buildings adapted for users with special needs in 2015–2019).

The actual accessibility of library buildings and premises exceeds the minimum requirements defined by the Act of 19 July 2019 on ensuring accessibility for people with special needs and reported by libraries in form K-03. Thinking of accessibility defined in broader terms, additional aspects such as the location of the building in terms of access by public transport, the corresponding number of accordingly marked parking spaces, automatic doors, handrails at the stairs, etc. should be considered. Just as important is the appropriate technical equipment in the buildings (e.g. induction loops) and at readers' seats (e.g. audiobook players, e-book readers with a font magnification option, optical magnifiers, text-to-speech readers, speech synthesiser, Braille keyboards), and markings (guide paths, Braille information, instructions in Polish Sign Language [PJM]), as well as appropriate space arrangement – a clear and

2 Data by Statistics Poland (as of 31 December 2019).

LIBRARIES ADAPTED FOR USERS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN 2015–2019 (IN %)

YEAR	LIBRARIES AND BRANCHES IN TOTAL	LIBRARIES ADAPTED FOR PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS		INCLUDING LIBRARIES ADAPTED FOR					
				PEOPLE USING WHEELCHAIRS				THE BLIND AND PEOPLE WITH IMPAIRED VISION	
				ENTRANCE TO THE BUILDING		FACILITIES INSIDE THE BUILDING			
	In numbers	In numbers	In %	In numbers	In %	In numbers	In %	In numbers	In %
Public libraries – in general									
2019	7 881	3 605	46	3 511	45	2 102	27	105	1.3
2018	7 925	3 517	44	3 426	43	2 013	25	98	1.2
2017	7 953	3 394	43	3 299	41	1 914	24	81	1.0
2016	7 984	3 278	41	3 178	40	1 835	23	71	0.9
2015	8 050	3 178	39	3 081	38	1 766	22	59	0.7
Public libraries – urban areas									
2019	2 749	1 583	58	1 544	56	1 009	37	84	3.1
2018	2 746	1 544	56	1 503	55	965	35	80	2.9
2017	2 744	1 498	55	1 448	53	908	33	71	2.6
2016	2 744	1 452	53	1 398	51	888	32	63	2.3
2015	2 759	1 392	50	1 340	49	848	31	54	2.0
Public libraries – rural areas									
2019	5 132	2 022	39	1 967	38	1 093	21	21	0.4
2018	5 179	1 973	38	1 923	37	1 048	20	18	0.3
2017	5 209	1 896	36	1 851	36	1 006	19	10	0.2
2016	5 240	1 826	35	1 780	34	947	18	8	0.2
2015	5 291	1 786	34	1 741	33	918	17	5	0.1
Scientific libraries									
2019	848	661	78	639	75	577	68	198	23.3
2018	873	672	77	645	74	582	67	188	21.5
2017	896	677	76	647	72	583	65	173	19.3
2016	938	696	74	667	71	603	64	146	15.6
2015	1 001	728	73	695	69	613	61	120	12.0
Pedagogical libraries									
2019	256	135	53	132	52	95	37	2	0.8
2018	258	131	51	127	49	90	35	3	1.2
2017	257	131	51	126	49	89	35	3	1.2
2016	272	134	49	129	47	89	33	3	1.1
2015	272	130	48	125	46	88	32	4	1.5

Source: Statistics Poland, own study

easily accessible layout of rooms, an appropriate visual information system, passage routes of appropriate widths and bookshelf arrangements allowing for free access to books for people using wheelchairs.³ For the needs of people with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), special maps are drawn up with information about the location of collections and instructions on how to navigate this new social situation, the colours of furniture and rooms are also appropriately selected, and some libraries dim lights and mute all sounds and conversations on designated days and hours.⁴

SELECTED ACCESSIBILITY INDICATORS FOR LIBRARIES (BY TYPE) AND THEIR COLLECTIONS IN POLAND IN 2019

LIBRARIES	PUBLIC	SCIENTIFIC	PEDAGOGICAL
NUMBER OF LIBRARY UNITS	7 881	848	256
LIBRARY UNITS WITH ONLINE CATALOGUES (%)	71.9	72.4	94.9
POSSIBILITY OF ORDERING LIBRARY MATERIALS REMOTELY VIA THE ONLINE CATALOGUE (%)	40.5	52.6	84.8
LIBRARIES EQUIPPED WITH AUDIOBOOK PLAYERS (%)	4.1	4.3	3.7
NUMBER OF AUDIOBOOK PLAYERS USED IN LIBRARIES	875	69	18
LIBRARIES EQUIPPED WITH ELECTRONIC READERS (%)	3.7	6.6	3.7
NUMBER OF ELECTRONIC READERS USED IN LIBRARIES	1 484	629	70

Source: Statistics Poland, own study

- 3 M. Deńca, *Czytelnik niepełnosprawny w bibliotece – możliwości i ograniczenia* [Readers with disabilities in libraries: Possibilities and limitations], [in:] *Mobilnie, interaktywnie, kompetentnie. Usługi, media i technologie informacyjno-komunikacyjne w nowoczesnej bibliotece* [Mobile, interactive, competent. Information and communication services, media and technologies in a modern library], M. Wojciechowska, M. Cyrklaff-Gorczyca (Eds), Warsaw 2019, p. 376.
- 4 <https://biblioteka.wroc.pl/projekty/biblioteka-przyjazna-osobom-z-autyzmem/> [accessed: 3 August 2021].

Another just as important aspect of library accessibility for people with special needs are librarians themselves. Their proper attitude, openness, social skills and ability to deal with different groups of users are an indispensable component and a supplement to every library's equipment and the content of collections. In this context, two projects of the Association of Polish Librarians are particularly interesting. The first, 'Let's Make Friends with People on the Spectrum' (implemented in 2015 in cooperation with the SYNAPSIS Foundation)⁵, comprised a series of visits of people with ASD with therapists to selected Warsaw libraries. The visitors played the role of experts in the project by indicating what difficulties they faced when using the libraries and proposing solutions later included in a generally available information package (proposals of graphic markings, pictograms, tutorials, etc.), used in training courses and workshops for librarians.⁶ The second project, 'Accessibility Advocates', implemented in 2020 in cooperation with the Culture Without Barriers Foundation, involved preparing a group of 20 librarians for the role of accessibility advocates for people with disabilities, in particular with ASD; moreover, the knowledge was expanded, training courses and workshops were conducted, and events in libraries were organised.⁷

Another aspect of library accessibility, which is virtually absent from the literature and discourse on the accessibility of cultural institutions, is the issue of library opening days and hours. Libraries should consider the needs of different groups of users, including those professionally active, and ensure that they have the possibility to visit libraries. Libraries open from Monday to Friday, from 9 am to 5 pm, are available mainly to the economically inactive (non-working parents, independently functioning seniors and older children; younger children are typically supervised by adults). Enjoying reading-related activities like visiting libraries with children is an important element of parental reading socialisation. Library opening hours should take into account the time constraints of working parents as well as working carers of disabled persons.

5 <https://autyzm.sbp.pl/> [accessed: 3 August 2021].

6 Ibid.

7 <https://www.bn.org.pl/dla-bibliotekarzy/narodowy-program-rozwoju-czytelnictwa-2.0/o-narodowym-programie-rozwoju-czytelnictwa-2.0> [accessed: 3 August 2021].

According to Statistics Poland, between 2014 and 2019, the percentage of public libraries (including branches) open on Saturdays remained at a similar level of approx. 22% (of all open libraries, 39% were open on Saturdays in urban areas and only 13% in rural areas). In 2020, as a result of the pandemic, the accessibility of libraries open on Saturdays decreased to 15%, while the average number of working hours per week was reduced from 33 in 2019 to 32 in 2020. According to the National Library, the accessibility of public libraries on Saturdays is a key requirement to ensure the universal accessibility of public libraries, which is reflected in the next edition of the National Reading Development Programme and grant conditions for the purchase of new releases.⁸

THE ACCESSIBILITY OF LIBRARY COLLECTIONS

Given that the number of available technical and ICT solutions is growing and the attitude of librarians towards readers' expectations and needs is changing, library collections can increasingly be accessed by people who, for various reasons (reduced mobility, unfavourable working hours, pandemic restrictions), cannot come to the library during its hours of operation and borrow books on site and in person.

'PHONE BOOK REQUESTS'

This service is dedicated to people who, due to disability, reduced mobility or age, cannot independently visit the public library to borrow or return books. They can call the library to borrow library materials and have them delivered to a specific address. Data from voivodeship libraries⁹ shows that, in the regular mode of library operation, this service is available in nearly half of Poland's public libraries (it was partially limited in 2020 due to the pandemic), with books delivered either by librarians or volunteers. The largest number of libraries providing this service are

8 <https://www.bn.org.pl/dla-bibliotekarzy/narodowy-program-rozwoju-czytelnictwa-2.0/o-narodowym-programie-rozwoju-czytelnictwa-2.0> [accessed: 3 August 2021].

9 Reports of voivodeship public libraries for the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, own study.

in the Dolnośląskie (72%), Warmińsko-Mazurskie (70%), Opolskie (68%), and Zachodniopomorskie (67%) voivodeships, and the lowest in the Małopolskie (39%) and Łódzkie (41%) voivodeships.

BOOK DROP BOXES AND PICK-UP LOCKERS

Automated library vending machines, book pick-up lockers and drop boxes are located outside libraries and operate around the clock, i.e. outside the library working hours. Drop boxes¹⁰ can be used to return books, while book pick-up lockers (similar to popular package lockers) allow users to collect items ordered in advance¹¹ or – depending on the locker type – also borrow one of the books currently stored in the locker.¹² Automated book pick-up lockers are expensive and technologically advanced machines that exceed the budget capacity of smaller libraries. As a result, libraries recognising the potential of these solutions are looking for other options (e.g. they adapt metal lockers with digital codes or use the InPost¹³ parcel lockers¹⁴). The presence of these devices significantly increases the accessibility of library resources. Book pick-up lockers can be used by people who work in shifts or commute to work (this is why one of the lockers in Grodzisk Mazowiecki is located at the local train station¹⁵), while drop boxes and safe boxes facilitate the timely return of borrowed items. Given that books are borrowed and returned without a need for human interaction, these solutions have proven extremely functional during the pandemic and their popularity is expected to increase. In 2020, 180 libraries operated their own drop boxes or safe

10 <http://www.biblioteka.piotrkow.pl/n,oddawanie-wypożyczonych-książek-jeszcze-nigdy-nie-było-takie-proste> [accessed: 3 August 2021].

11 <https://bibliotekawawer.pl/nowa/książkomaty/> [accessed: 3 August 2021].

12 <https://www.twojaksiegarnia.pl/szuflandia-lodz-biblioteka-samoobsługowa/> [accessed: 3 August 2021].

13 InPost is a Polish company specialising in the provision of postal services and operating its own network of parcel lockers [translator's note].

14 This solution was applied by the Municipal Public Library in Skawina, <https://biblioteka-skawina.pl/blizej-książki/> [accessed: 3 August 2021].

15 <https://biblioteka.grodzisk.pl/nasze-uslugi/książkomat/> [accessed: 3 August 2021].

boxes (compared to only 83 in 2019), while 20 libraries had book pick-up lockers (compared to 11 in 2019).¹⁶

ONLINE CATALOGUES

A prerequisite ensuring the smooth operation of solutions such as 'Phone Book Requests' or book pick-up lockers is an online catalogue with the option of remotely viewing library resources and placing orders and reservations. While nearly all libraries have access to the Internet and computers, differences still prevail in the percentage of institutions with an online catalogue and library software for remote orders (Table: Selected accessibility indicators for libraries [by type] and their collections in Poland in 2019). The disproportions between scientific, pedagogical and public libraries in the accessibility of these services result from the library size and budgets of their organising authorities – in small one-librarian facilities it is more difficult to find the funding for the purchase and maintenance of library software, and additional person-hours for its operation (e.g. an IT specialist).

This edition of the National Reading Development Programme 2021–2025 envisages the connection of 480 public libraries from the Lubelskie, Świętokrzyskie and Łódzkie voivodeships, free of charge, to the common IT platform using advanced software and cloud services¹⁷, which will significantly increase the accessibility of online catalogues (voivodeships with the lowest percentage of public libraries featuring an online catalogue were selected for the programme).

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

The definition of 'people with special needs' extends beyond the group of people with disabilities, which may cause problems with the identification of the persons concerned in practice.¹⁸ In our practice and in accordance with the guidelines of the International Federation of Library

16 Reports of voivodeship public libraries for the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, own study.

17 <https://www.bn.org.pl/dla-bibliotekarzy/narodowy-program-rozwoju-czytelnictwa-2.0/budowa-ogolnokrajowej-sieci-bibliotecznej-poprzez-zintegrowany-system-zarzadzania-zasobami-bibliotek/> [accessed: 16 September 2021].

18 R. Golać, *Zapewnienie dostępności osobom ze szczególnymi potrzebami* [Ensuring accessibility for people with special needs], *Bibliotekarz* 2019, No. 12, pp. 35–37.

Associations and Institutions (IFLA), the term 'disadvantaged persons' is preferred¹⁹, which – next to the blind and people with partial vision loss, the deaf and hard of hearing, people with physical and intellectual disabilities, and people with ASD – also applies to people with dyslexia and weak readers.²⁰ These groups of readers require special support in the form of appropriate library organisation including access not only to audio, tactile, large-font and bilingual books (e.g. with sign language signs, Braille books) corresponding to the needs and abilities of the said groups²¹, but also to exercises, educational and therapeutic games, aids and toys for sensory integration, films, music, etc.

All readers benefit from the widening library offer. While, due to licensing restrictions, a vast array of texts converted into DAISY or CZYTAK format files can be played/listened to only by people with a certified degree of disability or an equivalent certificate²², audiobooks, e-books and other types of special collections are available to all readers. Audiobooks democratise access to books for those who, due to dyslexia or other conditions, insufficient reading training or literary socialisation, have difficulty reading print efficiently.²³ The steadily growing number of audiobook loans

- 19 The respective committee of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) is the IFLA Standing Committee of Libraries Serving Disadvantaged Persons.
- 20 B. Irvall, G. Skat Nielsen, *Access to libraries for persons with disabilities – checklist*, IFLA Professional Reports 2005, No. 89, <https://www.ifla.org/resources/?oPubId=6978> [accessed: 16 September 2021]. Cf. M. Deńca, *Czytelnik niepełnosprawny w bibliotece...*, op. cit., p. 370.
- 21 For example, deaf people who only use PJM are unable to read black print, people with intellectual disabilities may have great difficulty in analysing and interpreting the content they read, and they need appropriate text that is easier to follow, while people with ASD rarely read fiction and typically seek books in narrow specialisations matching their interests. Cf. M. Deńca, *Czytelnik niepełnosprawny w bibliotece...*, op. cit., p. 373.
- 22 M. Fedorowicz-Kruszewska, *Współczesne usługi dla niepełnosprawnych użytkowników bibliotek – przegląd form* [Contemporary services for library users with disabilities: A review of forms], *Biuletyn EBIB* 2012, No. 5(132), p. 5, <http://ebibojs.pl/index.php/ebib/article/view/532/563> [accessed: 2 August 2021].
- 23 I. Koryś, D. Michalak, Z. Zasacka, R. Chymkowski, *Stan czytelnictwa w Polsce w 2017 r.* [Readership in Poland in 2017], Warsaw 2018, p. 52.

confirms that they are a valuable addition to public library collections (Table: Books and selected types of special collections [numbers of copies] borrowed from public libraries in 2014–2019).

BOOKS AND SELECTED TYPES OF SPECIAL COLLECTIONS [NUMBERS OF COPIES] BORROWED FROM PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN 2014–2019

YEAR	BOOKS	AUDIO-VISUAL MATERIALS (EXCLUDING AUDIOBOOKS)	AUDIOBOOKS
2014	111 762 893	2 079 610	1 124 445
2015	109 164 643	2 010 701	1 288 032
2016	107 356 617	1 948 929	1 406 010
2017	105 117 584	1 895 915	1 548 700
2018	101 829 571	1 817 792	1 610 187
2019	102 695 130	1 716 911	1 742 389

Source: Statistics Poland, own study

DIGITAL LIBRARIES AND LICENCED COLLECTIONS ON REMOTE ACCESS PLATFORMS

Given the current technology, the digitisation of library resources and making them available in electronic form is an easy process, limited only by copyright and the principle of fair use. A good example is the 'Academica' Digital Loans System for Research Publications.²⁴ Using a PC turned into an Academica terminal, any public library – regardless of the book collection size, the population it serves or distance from significant academic centres – can offer access to over 3 million Polish scientific publications and the entire collection of the POLONA National Digital Library. For licencing and copyright reasons, these resources can only be used through the Academica terminals on site (in libraries and other authorised institutions such as research centres, museums, schools,

24 M. Cieniewska, A. Nobis-Fechner, *Biblioteka w domu każdego niewidomego – 10 lat Serwisu Wypożyczeń On-line Działu Zbiorów dla Niewidomych* [Library in the home of every blind person: Ten years of the Online Lending Service of the Department of Collections for the Blind], [in:] *Mobilnie, interaktywnie, kompetentnie...*, op. cit., pp. 239–242.

etc.), which means that access to them is limited to the institution's working hours.

According to the regulations on fair use²⁵, special rights in this regard are granted only to persons with disabilities with a certified degree of disability or an equivalent certificate. Using the Online Lending Service of the Department of Collections for the Blind at the Main Library of Labour and Social Security (former Central Library of the Polish Association of the Blind), the blind²⁶ have access to audiobooks converted to the DAISY and Czytak formats, films with audio description, selected press titles and text publications, etc., with a monthly limit of 3 GB for downloading content from the Service. All materials are available online, without the need to visit the local public library. However, the other side of this coin is that library seats adapted for the blind and partially sighted users, in which public libraries invested significant resources, frequently stand empty as users can obtain publications and library materials in a different manner.

Other library users interested in accessing new releases and other copyrighted publications in the form of e-books without visiting the library in person or (as during the pandemic in 2020) when such a visit is impossible for various reasons (e.g. in the case of people with reduced mobility) can avail themselves of remote access codes to commercial platforms such as Legimi or Ibuk. Libraries send access codes (as sets of numbers and characters) via e-mail or SMS, and e-books can be accessed and read on electronic devices (readers, tablets, smartphones, PCs). In 2020, at least 127 000 readers used this form of access (for platforms allowing the simultaneous use on two devices, the actual number of users could be higher), which translates into users reading over 950 000 e-books and listening to over 67 000 audiobooks.²⁷

25 Cf. Articles 28 and 33.1 of the Act of 4 February 1994 on copyright and related rights (consolidated text: Journal of Laws 2000, No. 80, item 904, as amended).

26 The number of Service users has been growing steadily since its launch in 2008. In 2017, it had 2 498 active users (compared to 615 in 2008). Cf. M. Cieniewska, A. Nobis-Fechner, *Biblioteka w domu...*, op. cit., p. 247.

27 Reports of voivodeship public libraries for the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, own study.

SUMMARY

Given the dense library network and a large number of institutions located in pre-1989 buildings, the largest challenge faced by public libraries is to meet the architectural adaptation requirements and make their premises accessible in the broadest possible sense (e.g. appropriate location with convenient access by public transport, parking spaces, adjusted opening days and hours). The introduction of new solutions and services ('Phone Book Requests', book pick-up lockers and drop boxes, online catalogues for remote viewing and ordering, digital libraries and repositories, remote access codes for licenced collections) allows users to access a part of the collection without visiting the library in person (within the opening hours), all of which translates into increased accessibility of libraries to all groups of users.



SELECTED PUBLICATIONS:

- Cieniewska M., Nobis-Fechner A., *Biblioteka w domu każdego niewidomego – 10 lat Serwisu Wypożyczeń On-line Działu Zbiorów dla Niewidomych* [Library in the home of every blind person: Ten years of the Online Lending Service of the Department of Collections for the Blind], [in:] *Mobilnie, interaktywnie, kompetentnie. Usługi, media i technologie informacyjno-komunikacyjne w nowoczesnej bibliotece* [Mobile, interactive, competent. Information and communication services, media and technologies in a modern library], M. Wojciechowska, M. Cyrklaff-Gorczyca (Eds), Warsaw 2019.
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- Markiewicz M., *Oferta Wojewódzkiej Biblioteki Publicznej im. Marszałka J. Piłsudskiego w Łodzi dla seniorów i osób z niepełnosprawnościami/dysfunkcjami* [Offer of the Marshal J. Piłsudski Voivodeship Public Library in Łódź for seniors and people with disabilities], Bibliotekarz 2021, No. 1.
- *Niewidomi w świecie książek i bibliotek: wybrane zagadnienia* [The blind in the world of books and libraries: Selected aspects], M. Czerwińska, T. Dederko (Eds), Kielce 2008.
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- Sikora K., *Kreatywność bibliotekarza w pracy z czytelnikiem o specjalnych potrzebach. Na przykładzie warsztatów prowadzonych w Dziale Integracyjno-Biblioterapeutycznym Biblioteki Śląskiej* [Librarians' creativity in working with readers with special needs. An example of workshops conducted in the Department of Integration and Library Therapy at the Silesian Library], Poradnik Bibliotekarza 2018, No. 3.

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READING BOOKS IN THE FIRST YEAR OF THE PANDEMIC (2020)

National Library of Poland

In November 2020, the National Library conducted another book readership study in Poland (regular readership studies have been held since the early 1990s). A nationwide representative sample of people aged 15 and over comprised 2 015 respondents. As in previous years, the Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) method was used. The study serves to identify the most important phenomena and trends in book readership in Poland. As a sociological study it covers a variety of book-reading practices (driven by individual needs, educational duty, the nature of work, etc.) and their socio-demographic determinants. Book-reading choices are analysed regardless of the publication type (fiction, academic writing, popular science, utility texts, etc.), editorial form (printed codes, e-books), or source (purchased, received as a gift, downloaded from the Internet, borrowed from friends, family or the library). Book reading is also studied in the context of other reading practices such as reading texts published online.

The implementation of the 2020 study was significantly affected by the unique and difficult circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. On the one hand, this situation presented us with an organisational challenge; on the other, it created an opportunity to formulate and empirically verify new hypotheses. While the most important questions

from the previous study editions remained unchanged, new ones were added to identify possible changes in Poles' attitude to reading during the pandemic.

BOOK READERS: WHO ARE THEY?

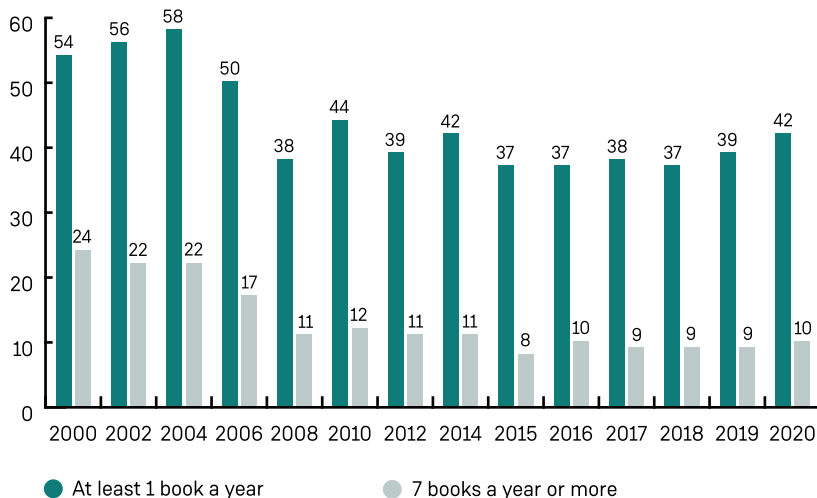
In 2020, 42% of respondents answered 'yes' to the question about reading at least one book, in its entirety or in part, in the previous 12 months. In the context of the previous study editions (Figure: Book reading in Poland in 2000–2020 [in %]), this means a slight increase in the percentage of book readers. In this group, there are clearly more women than men (51% and 33% respectively), with 15% of women reading at least 7 books a year (compared to only 7% of men). Women have a more positive emotional attitude towards books, are more likely to say that they like reading books or like it very much (52% and 32% respectively), and the percentage of responses indicating a reluctant or very reluctant attitude to reading is nearly two times lower in women (23%) than in men (44%). The factors contributing to these more and more visible differences include, primarily, education – there are more women than men who hold university diplomas. Given that, on average, women spend more years in education and are therefore subjected to its formative effect for longer periods, they have more time to internalise the constant need for books and the pleasure offered by reading them.

The role of education as an intervening variable can also be observed in terms of the place of residence. Since there are relatively many people with primary or basic vocational education living in villages and small towns, it is not surprising that books are read primarily by residents of larger towns and cities (55% in cities with a minimum population of 500 000), while villages and towns of up to 20 000 inhabitants statistically have the fewest readers (37% and 38% respectively).

Similarly to the previous editions of the study, age also proved to be an important demographic variable influencing the declared readership levels. The probability of reading books was found to be inversely proportional to the respondents' age. The number of book readers was the largest in the group of 15–18-year-olds, i.e. among secondary school students (76%), and the lowest among the oldest respondents – aged over 60 (33%) and over 70 (only 22%). School education remains an extremely important

institutional factor enforcing reading books; however, only some graduating students continue to feel the need to read books when no longer obliged to do so.

BOOK READING IN POLAND IN 2000–2020 (IN %)



Source: The National Library

In addition to demographic variables such as education, age, gender and place of residence, people's subjective assessment of their material situation is of great importance. While related to the respondents' actual material and social situation, it is not identical with it. The most educated, professionally active people living in large cities feel the safest and most confident. Statistically, those who believe they have enough money to meet all their current needs (57%) and increase their savings (63%), are also more likely to read. Respondents struggling with getting by on a daily basis are less likely to read books (18%). Although reading does not have to generate high costs (after all, books can be borrowed from libraries or from friends), the pandemic restrictions on access to cultural institutions and interpersonal contacts may have affected the reading practices of this group of respondents. More factors can make people see their social situation as unfavourable and uncertain – and therefore rarely reach for books – such as intergenerational cultural patterns, systems of norms and values, and related aspirations.

SCREEN AND PAPER

One of the questions in the survey was about the form of books. The respondents clearly prefer print books. Reading books on a computer screen, electronic reader, phone or tablet was declared by only 5% of the studied readers, particularly school and university students. Among professionally active readers, this form of reading books was declared primarily by respondents whose work includes intensive use of computers and mobile devices for at least eight hours a day. These are typically people whose jobs require higher education; this group hardly features any physical workers who are the least likely to read books. While print books definitely prevail in each group of readers regardless of demographic variables, it should be remembered that book reading is a very special case of reading practices in general, which precludes any generalisations with respect to print books.

Books read on digital devices were purchased as downloads to disks or the cloud (21% of people reading books on screens) or downloaded free of charge (18%). The use of books provided in streaming for a subscription fee is also relatively popular (28%) in this otherwise small population. Digital books, like paper ones, can also be shared by friends, including virtual ones with whom users are not in touch on a daily basis or in any other way than online.

WHAT HAS CHANGED BECAUSE OF THE PANDEMIC?

The primary factor that affected our everyday life in 2020 was the COVID-19 pandemic, which has brought about dramatic changes in the operation of virtually all institutions, including schools and workplaces. At the same time, previous social differences have not disappeared – the difficult experience of the pandemic situation has not been the same for everyone and in every area. Some of the economically active people turned to remote work; however, for obvious reasons, this switch was not possible in every job. People with school-age children found themselves in a particularly challenging situation, forced to reorganise their home space to accommodate children's remote education and their own teleworking at the same time. The new circumstances affected everyone, including

single people, the economically inactive and the elderly, in whose case the sense of exclusion only intensified.

The pre-existing social differences have become even clearer in the pandemic. In general, those who read books before the pandemic continued to do so also during it, while those who showed no interest in books before did not turn into readers under the new circumstances. The number of book readers was the highest among people who worked remotely and had the same or a larger number of professional responsibilities compared to pre-pandemic life, and the lowest among the unemployed and those whose mode of working did not change significantly. People working remotely are on average better educated compared to the general population, and the level of education is one of the basic variables influencing people's reading attitudes. During the pandemic, content available in digital form (films, series, music, computer games, e-books) was used slightly more frequently. Books on computer screens were more frequently read primarily by students and young adults. This relatively small scale of change can probably be explained by cultural participation patterns and their social distribution that had solidified before the pandemic. Increased interest in social media, music, series and films available in streaming, observed particularly in the generation of 40-year-olds – much larger than in the case of reading practices – is a consequence not only of people spending more time at home because of the pandemic, but also of pre-existing phenomena such as the crisis of traditional television or changes in access to music.

The social crisis caused by the pandemic poses a unique challenge. It is extremely difficult to predict which phenomena or processes will stay with us for good, inasmuch as the first diagnoses are emerging while the pandemic risk has not yet subsided.

THE ACCESSIBILITY OF BOOKS IN THE FIRST YEAR OF THE PANDEMIC

One of the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 was limited access to cultural and educational institutions, including libraries.¹ This

1 See I. Koryś, *Libraries in the face of the pandemic*, 'Polish Culture Yearbook' 2020, p. 62.

situation had an adverse effect on the accessibility of books and contributed to restricting reading practices to the home space.

Analyses of the book publishing and production markets reveal a notable decline of 16 percentage points in the number of books published in 2020.² However, as in previous years, most readers preferred to buy books (Figure: Sources of print books in 2020 by readers' age [in %]). Compared to 2019, a statistically significant (4 percentage points) increase in the role of individual purchases as a source of books can be observed. Stationary bookshops temporarily closed due to the pandemic could be replaced by online purchases. Books were bought primarily by those already engaged in reading: people with higher education, with extensive home libraries, who enjoy reading (97% of such people bought at least one book), and those who looked for information about books on their own more often than others.

Regardless of the circumstances, including the pandemic, the social life of a book starts in specific social conditions. Its success is largely driven by people's opinions, information about the book or the fact that it comes from people close to us – friends (49% of readers heard about the book they last read from a friend) and family members (38%). Seniors over 60 years old were more likely to learn about books from family (48% of respondents at this age), and less often from friends (38%). The youngest respondents were the least likely to exchange opinions about books with their families (only 29% of respondents aged 15–24 followed a book recommendation from a relative), with their reading choices more often influenced by other adults (32%), e.g. academic or school teachers. The information and book reviews available online also shaped the social life of books and readers' decisions to read them, thus complementing or replacing direct communication in this area with loved ones. Such external advice was found useful by 23% of readers, particularly avid readers (34%), people with higher education (34%) and professionally active people.

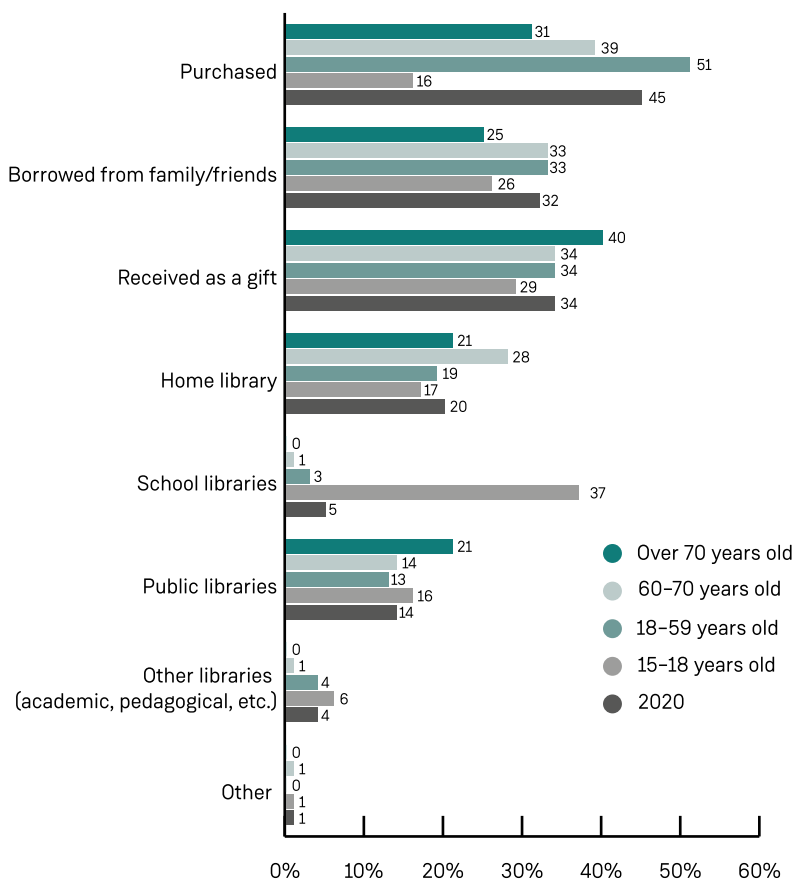
The next two most popular sources of books were direct social interactions with people from readers' close environment. These are non-

2 See O. Dawidowicz-Chymkowska, 'Ruch Wydawniczy w Liczbach' 2020 [Polish Publishing in Figures 2020], Warsaw 2021, p. 2, www.bn.org.pl/download/document/1624448572.pdf [accessed: 6 September 2021].

institutional ways of exchanging or sharing books: book gifts (34% read a book they received as a present) and borrowing books from family or friends (32% of respondents read a book from such a source; see Table: Sources of print books...). This form of access largely depends on people's participation in the reading culture. Although we read books most often alone (except when we read to children), it is a socially shaped practice.³ The chance of people engaging in book reading increases in a social environment where it is an obvious and frequently experienced practice. In Poland, two socio-demographic variables are particularly characteristic of people with a lower tendency to read books: education and age. The number of book readers and those in whose social environment reading is a common practice is the smallest among people with basic vocational education and older people, over 60 and especially 70 years of age. Every third respondent declared that no one in their immediate family, including family members within the same household, reads books – as many as three quarters of people in this group do not have books at home. Non-reading families were declared by every second person with basic vocational education (compared to only 13% with higher education), 60% of people over 70 years old, and 41% of people aged 60–70. Every fifth respondent said that among their acquaintances and friends no one reads books, with this number rising to every fourth respondent in the category of 60 years and over (35% of respondents over 70 years of age), compared to 35% among people with basic vocational education and only 6% of people with higher education. As many as 37% of people with basic vocational education and 40% of people over 70 years of age did not have any books at home, not even textbooks (compared to only 5% of people with higher education). Furthermore, 45% of people with vocational education, 54% of people over 70 years of age and 38% of the studied 60-year-olds did not know the location of the nearest local library (compared to only 20% of respondents with higher education).

- 3 See: E. Long, *Book Clubs: Women and the Uses of Reading in Everyday Life*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 2003 ; *Situated literacies. Theorising Reading and Writing in Context*, D. Barton, M. Hamilton, R. Ivanič (Eds), London–New York 2010.

SOURCES OF PRINT BOOKS IN 2020 BY READERS' AGE (IN %)



N = 100% = 853.

Source: The National Library

Restrictions on the use of libraries and social interactions, one might think, should increase readers' interest in their own book collections; however, this was not the case. Every fifth reader reached for a book from their home library. These readers differed in terms of social background and participation in the reading culture, had both modest and rich book collections at home, and assessed their financial situation as both high and low. Books from home libraries were a more frequent choice only in the group of 60-year-olds (28% of respondents in this age category; Figure: Sources of print books...) and economically inactive people (every third pensioner), with physical workers choosing this option the least often (11%).

Libraries (of different types) are a source of books for a smaller percentage of readers. In 2020, the pandemic restrictions reduced the opportunity to visit a library – as a result, the number of people reading books from the library decreased, although the drop was relatively small (4 percentage points). Books from public libraries were more frequently borrowed by women than men (15% and 10% respectively), and by older readers, particularly over 70 years of age (21% of respondents at this age), than younger people (cf. Figure: Sources of print books...). People who borrow books from public libraries have various social backgrounds and professions; however, they have one thing in common: they all enjoy reading.

Young people included in the study (8% of readers, 4% of all respondents) read books primarily from the school reading list – it was also them who used school libraries (Figure: Sources of print books...). Pedagogical, academic and scientific libraries have their users (5% of the reading respondents borrowed at least one book from a library of this type): mostly learners, freelancers, and specialists. Although many university students had to stay at home (and thus away from the university) due to the pandemic restrictions and remote classes, the percentage of respondents who borrowed books from pedagogical, academic and scientific libraries did not change in 2020.

READING PREFERENCES IN 2020

A detailed analysis of Poles' reading choices in 2020, juxtaposed with the results from the previous study editions⁴, reveals a continuation of trends observed in the previous years. Olga Tokarczuk and Remigiusz Mróz opened the list of the most read authors for the second year in a row.

There is an increase in readers' interest in Polish genre literature, particularly suspense and thriller, and crime stories. Polish authors are effectively competing with international ones, using trendy conventions such as noir fiction, psychological thrillers, spy novels and crime stories to deal with current social problems.

In parallel, the audience of high-art literature, particularly Polish classics, is shrinking and is increasingly limited to school students and school

4 See R. Chymkowski, Z. Zasacka, *Stan czytelnictwa w Polsce w 2020 roku* [Readership in Poland in 2020], Warsaw 2021, <https://www.bn.org.pl/download/document/1621420376.pdf> [accessed: 6 September 2021].

reading lists. This trend applies not only to classics but also to more ambitious contemporary literature. In addition to Olga Tokarczuk, only one other Polish author, Szczepan Twardoch, can boast a wider group of readers in 2020. Interest in his work has also increased with stage productions and a television adaptation of one of his novels.

Fantasy attracts primarily the youngest readers. While this genre is largely dominated by international authors, Andrzej Sapkowski and his novels have stayed popular for many years.

Non-fiction offers books of many different types and fields, from more serious to lighter topics. Although authors of such publications hardly ever make it to the top of popularity rankings, they have their regular readers.

It is difficult to say to what extent months of the pandemic have affected people's specific reading interests. A detailed map of Poles' reading preferences reveals a significant representation of psychological self-help books on self-control and emotional well-being. Perhaps such publications best correspond to readers' needs during the pandemic.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS:

- Chymkowski R., Zasacka Z., *Stan czytelnictwa w Polsce w 2020 r.* [Readership in Poland in 2020], Warsaw 2021.
- Dawidowicz-Chymkowska O., 'Ruch Wydawniczy w Liczbach' 2020 [Polish Publishing in Figures 2020], Warsaw 2021.
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- *Situated literacies. Theorising Reading and Writing in Context*, D. Barton, M. Hamilton, R. Ivanič (Eds), London–New York 2010.

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MUSEUM ACCESSIBILITY FOR PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR MUSEUMS AND PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

National Institute for Museums and Public Collections

The National Institute for Museums and Public Collections is a state cultural institution managed by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage. As an expert institution it has several statutory tasks, one of which is to disseminate knowledge about all areas of museum operations such as the protection of collections and ensuring their accessibility for all interested parties, including people with special needs. The Institute gathers knowledge, compiles data as part of its research programme 'Museum Statistics', trains museum employees, and promotes the accessibility of museums and museum collections through scientific, educational and promotional publications.¹

1 *Action Programme of the National Institute for Museums and Public Collections for 2020–2022*, https://bip.mkidn.gov.pl/media/docs/ogloszenia/2019/20191206_Program_dzialania_NarodowyInstytut_Muzealnictwa_i_Ochrony_Zbiorow_na_lata_2020-2022.pdf, p. 4 [accessed: 3 August 2021].

PROGRESS IN THE PROCESS OF ADAPTING MUSEUMS TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Before Statistics Poland publishes its summary reports on the state of ensuring the accessibility of public sector bodies², data on the accessibility of museums for people with special needs can be primarily found in the Statistics Poland report series 'Culture in ... [a given year]' and in the reports from the Institute's programme 'Museum Statistics'. In addition, *The state of construction and security infrastructure in museums*, a report published by the Institute in 2015, may also serve as an interesting source of additional information on architectural and, partially, communication accessibility.

Given the changes in the phrasing of questions, the Statistics Poland data for the last decade lacks the aspect of continuity. Nevertheless, it is worth analysing and including in the annual report, as in addition to information on the increasing number of museums (and their branches) and a generally similar percentage of institutions adapted year by year, this data also reveals growing social awareness, as evidenced, for example, by the ever more precise definitions of ways to determine museum accessibility in the K-02 form – Report on museums and institutions related to museums. The initially simplified definition of accessibility as architectural access to museum entrances and the interior has evolved along with rising awareness of various methods that allow to make museum collections available: from making museums generally accessible to people with visual impairment to an increasingly more precise definition of widely-promoted audio description to general adaptation, i.e. that which does not preclude individual methods, of exhibitions to the needs of people with disabilities.

Information as to what constitutes 'special needs' in the case of the elderly or those whose special situation is temporary, e.g. pregnant women, can be expected to be provided in the future, as the term of special needs has only recently been extended to include people other than those with a certified degree of disability or an equivalent certificate.

2 This data will be published in November 2021.

THE ACCESSIBILITY OF MUSEUMS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES³

NAME	MUSEUMS, INCLUDING BRANCHES										
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	
	[build-ings]	[build-ings]	[build-ings]	[build-ings]	[build-ings]	[build-ings]	[build-ings]	[build-ings]	[build-ings]	[build-ings]	
Museums, including branches	777	768	822	844	926	945	949	945	959	932	
QUESTIONS ABOUT ACCESSIBILITY FOR PEOPLE WITH MOBILITY IMPAIRMENT											
Buildings adapted for people using wheelchairs: Entrance to the building	325	368	425	444	486	492	497	437	465	—	
Buildings adapted for people using wheelchairs: Facilities inside the building	239	272	308	321	361	373	381	369	398	—	
TOTAL											
Buildings adapted to the needs of people with disabilities	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	432	
Buildings adapted to the needs of people with disabilities: Entrance to the building	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	403	
Buildings adapted to the needs of people with disabilities: Facilities inside the building	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	366	
ACCESSIBILITY FOR THE BLIND AND PEOPLE WITH VISION IMPAIRMENT											
Buildings adapted for sightseeing by the blind and people with vision impairment	67	85	—	—	—	—	110	112	136	—	
Buildings offering audio description	—	—	119	83	98	122	—	—	—	—	
Questions about museum exhibitions											
Exhibitions adapted to the needs of people with disabilities	—	—	—	—	—	—	228	241	243	240	

Source: Statistics Poland, own data

3 Statistics Poland counts museums together with branches.

THE STATE OF KNOWLEDGE OF MUSEUM PROFESSIONALS AND TRAINING NEEDS

Museum professionals' interest in accessibility is reflected in their interest in training courses dedicated to this topic: both those organised for the needs of specific museums and those generally available, including commercial ones. From early on, one of the Institute's priorities has been to offer free accessibility training adapted to the needs of museum professionals. Since it was established over a decade ago, the Institute has organised 264 training courses for museum employees attended by a total of 8 201 participants⁴, including 30 training courses on museum accessibility for people with special needs attended by 475 participants. Out of the training courses held by the Institute, six focused on the preparation of audio description, nine on people with various types of sensory disabilities as guests of museums, seven on people with intellectual and mental impairment and people with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), four on museum accessibility online in terms of user needs, and four on legal regulations regarding museum accessibility for people with special needs.

In parallel, supplement training materials are available in an electronic version (*ABC Gość niepełnosprawny w muzeum* [The Fundamentals of... When a Person with Disability Visits the Museum], No. 2/13; *ABC Gość niepełnosprawny w muzeum cz. 2. Niepełnosprawność intelektualna, autyzm, grupy zróżnicowane* [The Fundamentals of... When a Person with Disability Visits the Museum, Part 2. Intellectual Disability, Autism, Diverse Groups], No. 7/2015; *ABC Muzeum dla seniorów* [The Fundamentals of... Museum for Seniors], No. 14/2020).⁵

Training courses addressing the legal aspects of museum accessibility for people with special needs were held in 2020 and in the first half of 2021 in response to the museum professionals' need to organise the

4 A total of 253 training courses were held from 2011 to 2020 – source: *10 lat NIMOZ w liczbach (2011–2021)* [10 Years of the National Institute for Museums and Public Collections in Numbers (2011–2021)], a leaflet published by the Institute, [https://nimoz.pl/files/articles/227/NIMOZ%20\(10\).pdf](https://nimoz.pl/files/articles/227/NIMOZ%20(10).pdf) [accessed: 3 August 2021]. In the first half of 2021, 11 training courses were organised attracting a total of 281 participants. Since March 2020, all training courses have been held online due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

5 Available at the Institute's website: <https://www.nimoz.pl/dzialalnosc/wydawnictwa/seria-szkolenia-nimoz> [accessed: 9 August 2021].

knowledge regarding the requirements of both acts on accessibility that entered into force in 2019. Given the large number of applications for the spring edition of the training (74 for 25 places available), we decided to record the lecture, supply it with subtitles and share it on our training website where it is available after logging in to the Institute's training system.

The increased interest in the legal aspects can be related to the approaching date of entry into force of the subsequent provisions of the Act on ensuring accessibility for people with special needs – the complaints procedure and changes in the status of alternative access. The profile of training applicants is also changing – throughout the first 10 years, the Institute trained predominantly educators and employees responsible for contact with the public. However, the last year and a half, i.e. the period since the entry into force of the Act of 19 July 2019 on ensuring accessibility for people with special needs and the Act of 4 April 2019 on the digital accessibility of websites and mobile applications of public entities, has brought an increased interest among museum managers responsible for legal requirements and the necessary organisational activities. Therefore, it can be assumed that the entry into force of both laws, along with the public institutions' obligation to fill in the Public Entity Accessibility Compliance Reporting Form⁶, may result in further strategic activities to increase the accessibility of museums.

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF MUSEUMS ADDRESSED TO PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Based on the data on educational activities organised by museums for people with disabilities, collected by the Institute as part of the project 'Museum Statistics' in 2016–2018, nearly half of museums participating in the survey offered educational activities dedicated to the blind and people with visual impairment, the deaf and people hard of hearing, people with mobility impairment, people with intellectual disabilities, and people with mental illnesses.⁷

6 Public Entity Accessibility Compliance Reporting Form, <https://lublin.stat.gov.pl/aktualnosci/formularz-raportu-o-stanie-zapewniania-dostepnosci-podmiotu-publicznego,188,1.html> [accessed: 9 August 2021].

7 Data collected by the Institute as part of the 'Museum Statistics' programme

MUSEUMS CONDUCTING EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES DEDICATED TO THE BLIND AND PEOPLE WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT, THE DEAF AND PEOPLE HARD OF HEARING, PEOPLE WITH MOBILITY IMPAIRMENT, PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES, AND PEOPLE WITH MENTAL ILLNESSES IN 2016–2018

YEARS	MUSEUMS CONDUCTING EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES DEDICATED TO THE BLIND AND PEOPLE WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT, THE DEAF AND PEOPLE HARD OF HEARING, PEOPLE WITH MOBILITY IMPAIRMENT, PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES, AND PEOPLE WITH MENTAL ILLNESSES	AVERAGE NUMBER OF ACTIVITIES	AVERAGE NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	SAMPLE SIZE – NUMBER OF MUSEUMS THAT COMPLETED THE QUESTIONNAIRE IN A GIVEN YEAR
2018	46%	17	287	260
2017	45%	19	315	247
2016	58%	16	16	217

Source: 'Museum Statistics', 2016–2018, own data

One of the Institute's tasks for 2021 is to develop the *Recommendations for Museums Regarding the Accessibility Plus Programme*.⁸ While working on the guidelines, we have collected⁹ information on what interests museum accessibility coordinators the most:

- Architectural Accessibility: Accessibility in historical buildings, specific problems related to the designing of accessible exhibitions, designs of showcases that are accessible and comply with the conservation and physical security requirements, designing of museums accommodating all needs of sightseeing paths, preparation of accessible outdoor exhibitions;
- Digital Accessibility: Identification of persons responsible for the museum's digital accessibility, ensuring the accessibility of documents generated by museums, accessible forms;
- Information and Communication Accessibility: Reconciling the value of artistic graphic designs and accessibility, universally accessible audio guides

in 2016–2018, <https://statystykamuzeow.pl/> [accessed: 6 August 2021].

8 <https://nimos.pl/baza-wiedzy/muzea-bez-barrier-dostepnosc-plus/rekomendacje-dla-muzeow-dotyczace-programu-dostepnosc-plus.html> [accessed: 6 December 2021].

9 Data provided by Sieć Liderów i Liderów Dostępności (Accessibility Leaders' Network).

or dedicated audio guides with audio description, accessible vernissage, choice of induction loop.

A question that frequently arises is that about the funding of the necessary accommodations – both in terms of critical investments and the permanent training of the entire museum staff. In addition, museum accessibility coordinators have to convince all museum employees that ensuring accessibility for people with special needs is a task of the entire team – not only the coordinator, educators and personnel responsible for contact with the public, but also exhibition curators and designers as well as the promotion, finance and fundraising departments.

SUMMARY

For the past decade, museum accessibility has been predominantly about making museums accessible to visitors with special needs. Currently, in the light of the Act on ensuring accessibility for people with special needs and the Act on the digital accessibility of websites and mobile applications of public entities, museums must focus on adapting their documents (e.g. contracts) as well as the entire museum space for contractors and potential employees, with special needs. The experience gained in the previous years by institutions and people responsible for making them accessible to the public will certainly help achieve this goal; however, given the historical architecture of many museums, one can expect that this process will have to take some time.



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MUSIC AND DANCE ACCESSIBLE TO EVERYONE

National Institute of Music and Dance

Music and dance are particular types of human activity. On the one hand, they are perceived as the most primeval and potentially related to people's corporeality and emotionality, but on the other, they have effectively undergone partial marginalisation and specialisation as a result of civilisation processes. Roderyk Lange, a renowned Polish anthropologist of dance, argued that the 'disintegrated modern society has lost its direct contact with dance and it is no longer an integral part of our group life' adding that the reduced position of dance as a vital component of culture is very clear.¹ The situation of music is similar. Multiple factors contribute to this status quo, e.g. changes in the hierarchy of values and social structure, the atomisation of societies, and a division into music and dance performers and their audiences. Many styles have developed to such intricate levels that their practice nowadays requires regularity, self-discipline and dedication, frequently enforcing high levels of professionalisation. Lange further contended that urbanised civilisation generally accepts that people are passive users of art, with the object of art becoming increasingly more distant due to ever narrower art specialisations.²

1 R. Lange, *O istocie tańca i jego przejawach w kulturze. Perspektywa antropologiczna* (title of the English version: *The nature of dance: An anthropological perspective*), Poznań 2009, p. 150.

2 Ibid., p. 83.

Both music and dance are frequently seen as examples of social entertainment and art for sale.³ We are currently immersed in the world of sounds, while certain dance forms are reserved for specific life situations. Regrettably, neither practising music nor dancing are common skills anymore, and many people avoid these activities even in the most fundamental scope. Dance education is generally perceived as a specialised subject. We tend to forget that education in the field of music and dance is not only about mastering certain performance techniques. Playing and listening to music has a positive impact on our well-being and the functioning of our organs, while developing our perception, aesthetic and emotional skills. Dance contributes to physical strength, social and cultural skills, significantly supporting human personality integration, social and emotional development, the development of motor skills and the symbolism of movement, and serving as a means of gaining awareness of space and time. For these reasons, music and dance education was appreciated as early as in the 18th century.⁴

The specialisation of music and dance techniques also reinforces the fairly common perception of music and dance as fields of activity that are difficult, if not impossible, to access by people with special needs, while in fact both music and dance are widely applied in special education and rehabilitation. This supports the thesis that people with special needs are a significant group to whom music and dance are addressed. Consequently, ensuring accessibility to both for people with special needs is an important task.

In the activity of the National Institute of Music and Dance, information and communication accessibility programmes take precedence over those focused on digital accessibility. Based on the feedback we receive, our largest user groups include pregnant women, people with small children, people with reduced health, people with reduced mobility, and the elderly. Further actions have been initiated which are addressed to people with disabilities.

3 Ibid.; see also R. Lange, *Krzeseł i pół stołu za przepierzeniem* [A chair and half a table behind the partition], an interview conducted by B. Kowalewska, *Gazeta Wyborcza – Gazeta Wielkopolska* 2000, No. 7–8.10, cited in: *Roderyk Lange o tańcu. Wybrane wywiady, wzmianki prasowe i artykuły* [Roderyk Lange on dance. A selection of interviews, press releases and articles], Poznań 2013, p. 40.

4 J. Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, London 1693.

When implementing music and dance projects, the Institute's employees always plan activities with broad participation in mind. Currently, the Internet is a presentation platform that increases accessibility. The Institute publishes most of its videos and other project materials on its websites and social media profiles. As a result, every user in Poland and abroad, regardless of the reason why they cannot participate otherwise, has the opportunity to watch our events either live (live streaming) or at another preferred time (archived materials).

In 2020, the Coryphaeus of Polish Music award gala was broadcast live on TVP Kultura. The award is presented to individual creators, artists, performers, musicologists, critics, journalists, humanists, researchers, animators, popularisers and managers of culture, as well as artistic groups and institutions, artistic events and creative, animation and educational projects. The annual gala features performances by outstanding Polish musicians of the classical, jazz and traditional genres, who are often winners of and nominees for the award in the previous years. Thanks to a long-standing cooperation with Channel Two of the Polish Radio, the event was also broadcast on the radio. Videos of the artistic programme parts and ceremony broadcasts are available on the Institute's YouTube channel.

Last year's and this year's ceremonies of the Oskar Kolberg Awards 'For Merit to Folk Culture', awarded every year on the initiative of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage to the most outstanding representatives of traditional culture, were broadcast live on the Internet. The video, along with numerous video panels and photo sessions dedicated to the award winners and produced by the Institute, can be viewed on our YouTube channel, at www.nagrodakolberg.pl, and on the websites of the gala partners.

One of the most important events for the dance art community in 2020, the 2nd Congress of Dance, was also broadcast live. These four days were filled with numerous events such as the Social Day, the Warsaw Dance Festival (events in public space) and conferences (discussion panels and events at the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews). The aims of the Congress were to integrate Poland's dance community, showcase its diversity and highlight the relativism of perception with regard to the art of dance and its low status in public opinion, with the objective of diagnosing the current problems faced by the dance community in Poland. The Congress had been preceded by online meetings of working groups, held until the end of May 2020 as free public con-

sultations. The online consultations via the Zoom and Mural platforms were attended by 90 representatives of the art of dance. In August 2020, closed expert consultations were held, with 18 people invited to participate. The online transmission of all panels offered the possibility to ask questions in the chat window, which were then forwarded to experts. As a result, people who could not come to Warsaw were able to actively participate in the panels. The entire event was recorded and is archived on the Institute's channels. The simultaneous interpretation of the discussion panels into English and Polish Sign Language (PJM) was provided. This important project was implemented with the support of volunteers. Seeking to offer young people the opportunity to gain valuable experience and fill the gap in young people's limited access to this type of activities, the Institute invited them to engage in volunteering. Nearly half of the volunteers involved in the organisation of the 2nd Congress of Dance were young people aged 13 or older, who provided auxiliary services adapted to their age.

With the aim of improving accessibility for many users, we also prepared the 'Classical Dance Tutorial' and the 'Contemporary Dance Tutorial'. In cooperation with the Olga Sławska-Lipczyńska Ballet School in Poznań and the Ludomir Różycki Ballet School in Bytom, a project was carried out which consisted in the recording of several dozen methodological classical dance lessons divided into individual ballet education stages, as in the ballet school curriculum. These short professional lessons present dance steps with variations emphasising the correct performance and methodology. The other project, implemented together with the Kielce Dance Theatre, resulted in the recording of several dozen professional jazz dance lessons also divided into the individual stages of learning this dance technique. Similarly, the lessons present dance steps with jazz variations, while focusing on correct performance and methodology. Both tutorials are available online, with selected lesson elements accordingly subtitled to increase accessibility.

In 2021, a methodological contemporary dance training based on the Martha Graham technique was organised in cooperation with the Martha Graham Dance School in New York, the only centre in the world that offers certified courses in this field. The 20-hour online training offered via a specially designed platform was attended by 16 ballet school teachers as well as 44 dance students and teachers from various academic centres in Poland.

In 2021, the Institute was also a partner of the 14th Golden Pointe Shoes Competition in Szczecin. Given that this edition was held online, the competition became accessible to the best ballet school graduates from all over the world. In addition to the awards granted by the jury, an audience award was also presented based on the results of online voting.

When planning our next activities, we take the context of accessibility into account. Currently, we are working on the organisation of an online International Conference summarising the outcomes of the 'Choreographic Territories: New Routes of the Avant-garde' project implemented in cooperation with the Adam Mickiewicz Institute. The conference will be dedicated to four leading figures in Polish choreography of the avant-garde period, Pola Nireńska, Bronisława Niżyńska, Marie Rambert and Yance Rudzka, and to the promotion of prominent 20th-century dance avant-garde artists of Polish origin. The event will feature Polish and international keynote speakers. Polish and English interpretation will be provided while the event itself will be recorded and later subtitled to increase accessibility to conference materials for people with hearing impairment.

Our accessibility-oriented efforts are not limited to sharing videos and materials online. Contact with art should primarily be a meeting of audiences with artists. Bearing in mind that some people have no opportunity to listen to music concerts or see dance shows in their place of residence, the Institute is implementing two important projects.

The first is related to the activity of The Polish Music Impresario and the series *Z klasyką przez Polskę* [With Classical Music across Poland] and the series *Z jazzem przez Polskę* [With Jazz across Poland] launched in 2021 to promote jazz music performed by some of the most renowned Polish artists. Seeking to expand the Impresario's operations, our objective is to reach smaller towns and municipalities with limited access to concerts and culture. The first concerts in the new series commenced in August in Lower Silesia and Łódź (Strzegom, Środa Śląska, Radomsk, Zduńska Wola). Both 'With Classical Music across Poland' and 'With Jazz across Poland' are financed by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage.

The second project has pursued similar objectives for as many as 11 years. The programme *Scena dla tańca* [The Stage for Dance] presents the most recent dance performances to audiences in smaller towns and places that otherwise do not feature a permanent auditorium for this type of activities. In 2021, seven projects were selected for the programme and were first staged in Bydgoszcz, Koszalin, Piła, Słupsk, Szczecin, and

Toruń. Further shows are planned in Cedry Wielkie, Ełk, Jędrzejów, Nowa Sól, Oborniki Śląskie, Opole, Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski, Rybnik, Szamotuły, Wałcz, etc.

Artists with disabilities are particularly affected by cultural exclusion. Since 2018, the Institute has developed its partnership with the Theatre Institute and the British Council as part of the 'Theatre-Dance-Disability' project. Meetings, conferences and stationary laboratories in Poland and abroad have been held annually since 2019 to enable networking and improve the competences of dance artists with and without disabilities. The activities have been implemented as part of the 'Europe Beyond Access' project⁵ and co-financed under the Creative Europe programme. In 2020, one three-day laboratory, three online group consultations and three individual consultations of Polish artists with Claire Cunningham were organised.

Considering the special needs of artists with disabilities, since the 2020 edition of the 'Supporting International Activity' programme, we have provided the possibility of applying for the co-financing of 'the adaptation costs incurred due to the individual needs of the person implementing the project in relation to their disability'. Applicants can apply for the funding in order to hire an assistant for a person with a disability, an interpreter, etc.

The programme seeks to improve the professional qualifications of dance artists and provide in-service training to dance teachers and researchers. These objectives are achieved by supporting the participation of Polish dancers, teachers, managers, researchers and critics in international workshops, seminars and training courses abroad as well as research trips.

This year, we are also launching the pilot version of a new artistic and social programme. 'The New Voice' is addressed to non-governmental organisations (NGOs) associating people with disabilities. The final effect of the programme will be *Nowy głos: L.E.M.* [The New Voice: L.E.M.], a performance dedicated to Stanisław Lem and his works and held to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the writer's birth. Interestingly, the programme pursues our mission to disseminate culture not only through improving the traditionally defined accessibility of art by reaching wider audiences,

5 <https://www.disabilityartsinternational.org/europe-beyond-access/> [accessed: 25 August 2021].

but also by involving people who struggle with various types of social exclusion due to disability on a daily basis in this professional opera and theatre production. It will allow these artists to perform on stage alongside professionals as equals, thus contributing to equal opportunities in a professional setting. The premieres of the performances are scheduled for August, September and October 2021 in Ełk, Łądek-Zdrój, Kłodzko, Krynica, and Nowy Sącz. With director Michał Znaniecki as the author of the artistic concept, the programme is implemented by the Institute in cooperation with the Jutropera Foundation and financed by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage.

Another great concern of the Institute is to ensure accessibility to its headquarters, which is presently not fully accommodated to host people with disabilities. Given that architectural adaptations in the building currently occupied by our institution are impossible, action has been taken to change the current seat, which should be finalised within the next six months.

The Institute's employees are well aware of the multitude of tasks that still need to be implemented to improve the cultural participation of marginalised people. Nevertheless, we believe that bringing dance and music closer to as many groups of people as possible, which is the primary idea of all our projects, is an important element in the Institute's strategy. The activities carried out thus far – sharing videos and educational and informational materials online, reaching out with concerts and dance performances to audiences in smaller localities, supporting the work of artists with disabilities – will undoubtedly be continued and modified in response to the current social demand.

Text by: National Institute of Music and Dance,
<https://nimit.pl/>

IS CULTURE FOR EVERYONE? THEATRE LIFE DURING THE PANDEMIC AND AN ANALYSIS OF THE INSTITUTE'S PROJECTS INVOLVING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Zbigniew Raszewski Theatre Institute

Founded in 2003, the Zbigniew Raszewski Theatre Institute is a state cultural institution that documents, promotes and animates Polish theatre life.

As a place of public debate about Polish theatre, the institute strives to broaden research perspectives and supports and carries out educational and promotional activities. In addition, it manages the largest website dedicated entirely to contemporary Polish theatre life, the online Encyclopedia of Polish Theatre, as well as a bookshop and a publishing house.

The institute provides access to the most extensive contemporary theatre archives in Poland, which offer an impressive collection of press articles, reviews, photos, theatre programmes, posters, and materials about specific theatres. Many digitised documents are available at: www.encyklopediateatru.pl.

THE ACCESSIBILITY PARADOX AND THE REALITY OF ONLINE THEATRE, 14 MARCH 2020 – 30 APRIL 2021

When theatres, opera houses, community centres, cabaret stages and school theatre clubs went into lockdown in Poland on 12 March 2020,

theatre people almost immediately moved online. A broader discussion started on theatre accessibility, as well as the accessibility of culture in general, or perhaps above all, in the context of the pandemic. The first few months showed that theatre artists wanted to stay in touch with audiences at all costs and in every possible way, and audiences craved this contact. Spontaneous and emotional projects sprang up, such as a new version of the Polish well-known song *Jeszcze w zielone gramy* [Playing 'Find Something Green'] recorded on Zoom by the Stefan Jaracz Ateneum Theatre in Warsaw with friends. Institutions scanned their archives to share material online.

The accessibility of theatre online was additionally boosted by two initiatives from the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage: the 'Culture Online' programme and the Culture Support Fund. The idea behind the first one was that access to the artistic projects prepared as part of it would be available free of charge for at least six months.

Due to the pandemic, viewers were able to take part in performances, concerts, performative readings and discussions organised by theatres, operas, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and freelancers all over Poland on a scale never seen before. The only condition was access to a good internet connection and the necessary equipment to enjoy the offer online. However, this meant that some people, for financial and geographical reasons or due to a lack of digital competence, were deprived of access to theatre or to culture in general.

Overnight, a considerable percentage of seniors, who had previously accounted for a large portion of theatre and opera audiences, was excluded from taking part in culture. What's more, the brief periods of relative 'freedom', when theatres could resume their activity with certain restrictions, were not that appealing to seniors. Most of them decided to stay at home out of fear for their health.

These two issues resulted in the accessibility paradox. On the one hand, we had an abundance of previously unavailable and now easily accessible performances and events such as operas and star recitals, while on the other hand, access to them required technical skills and financial outlays. As a result, while theatre opened up to new audiences during the pandemic, it also lost some groups that were once active participants.

Currently, theatre theoreticians and practitioners are trying to answer the question: What will stay with us after the pandemic and to what extent? It has become clear that audiences that have been 'spoilt' with easy access to online theatre will not easily go back to paying for tickets. Artists

are also unwilling to abandon this form of communication with viewers. This was revealed by the Institute's DIG IT competition, in which projects could be submitted in four categories: best premiere, best radio play, best other theatre project, and best event transferred to the internet. A total of 270 projects were submitted which reflected virtually every type of theatre activity. It was therefore necessary to establish criteria and set out those values that were expected and most sought-after. The most important one was artists' understanding of what the internet is and how to use it to its maximum capacity, also in terms of communication with viewers. Among the winners were large institutions with a well-established position and organisational skills as well as smaller organisations, independent artistic groups, and amateur ensembles. The variety of the projects that were submitted and those that won offered interesting observations as regards accessibility.

STUDIES ON THEATRE LIFE IN THE PANDEMIC

The first lockdowns, introduced due to the spread of the pandemic, started a search for contact with audiences in new forms and formulas. However, soon afterwards, the prevalent belief among both artists and audiences was that short-term projects, while extremely valuable in the first stages of the pandemic, should be supported by systemic changes. It became clear that throwing the theatre ecosystem out of balance would have long-term effects. As a result, as early as in the first months of the pandemic the institute launched several *ad hoc* assistance programmes to pursue one of our most fundamental objectives and respond to the needs reported by the theatre community. In parallel, we also continued our in-depth analysis of the pandemic's impact on theatre life in Poland. To this end, we launched a research project with seven interdisciplinary teams observing the changes occurring in Polish theatre. The project resulted in a series of unique reports offering multi-faceted analyses of the pandemic's effects on the entire theatre ecosystem: from theatre institutions and organisations to theatre employees, artists and audiences.¹

1 Reports are available on the institute's website: <https://www.instytut-teatralny.pl/dzialalnosc/projekty-i-programy/nowe-formy-istnienia-jak-zmienial-sie-teatr-w-pandemii/> [accessed: 25 August 2021].

The latter area was studied using qualitative methods in two periods. Between April and May 2020, Bogna Kietlińska collected statements from 675 people in an online survey. She asked whether theatre audiences were turning online during the pandemic, and if so to what extent. The study resulted in the report 'When the quarantine ends and we can go back to the theatre, I will. A theatre audience study during the coronavirus epidemic in Poland'.² Another study was conducted in autumn 2020 by Anna Buchner, Katarzyna Fereniec-Błońska, Katarzyna Kalinowska, and Maria Wierzbicka. These researchers looked for answers to questions on how theatre benefits from going online, how it has changed due to this significant experience, and what theatre audiences think about it. The findings are discussed in the report 'The online presence of theatres during the pandemic'.³

The vast majority of the participants in Bogna Kietlińska's study were 'people not professionally connected with theatre' (66%) but who were regular theatre goers before the pandemic. More than two thirds of the respondents had taken advantage of the online offering of theatres. As many as 70% of the respondents said that online theatre had many advantages. Answers given to this open question are catalogued and described in detail in the report. In terms of accessibility, it is worth paying attention to the following groups of respondents:

- People living outside large cities, for whom a visit to the theatre is more challenging for logistical and financial reasons (inflexible public transport timetables, transport as an additional cost of participating in culture);
- People on low incomes for whom participating in culture is difficult or impossible;
- People with domestic and family responsibilities who cannot leave home during certain hours (people looking after children, other people, animals, etc.);

2 See: B. Kietlińska, *Kiedy skończy się kwarantanna i będzie można wrócić do teatru, ja wrócę. Badanie publiczności teatralnej w czasie epidemii koronawirusa w Polsce* [When the quarantine ends and we can go back to the theatre, I will. A theatre audience study during the coronavirus epidemic in Poland], Warsaw 2021.

3 See A. Buchner, K. Fereniec-Błońska, K. Kalinowska, M. Wierzbicka, *Obecność teatrów w przestrzeni online w trakcie pandemii* [The online presence of theatres during the pandemic], Warsaw 2021.

- People for whom it is difficult or impossible to leave the house/institution (people with motor impairment, with illnesses, people in prisons and care institutions, etc.);
- People for whom being in the presence of other people is difficult/stressful/impossible.

Buchner *et al.* conducted their theatre audience study in autumn 2020. They defined two 'camps' in their report: sceptical viewers and viewers positive about the change. The first group featured two types labelled 'suffering viewers' and 'viewers on stand-by'.⁴ For the former type, the closing of theatres was a personal tragedy, with live theatre impossible to be replaced by online theatre. The latter ('stand-by') type also had a negative attitude towards online theatre but accepted it as temporary and crucial for maintaining contact with culture. Audiences representing a positive approach to online theatre were labelled 'opportunity viewers' and 'casual viewers'.⁵ The former were found to be 'the greatest beneficiaries of the pandemic and the lockdown'⁶; these were viewers who love theatre but have either no or limited access to it on a daily basis due to geographical, economic or individual barriers. The report 'The online presence of theatres during the pandemic' points to groups for whom theatre has actually become more accessible in the pandemic. With access to online theatre, 'opportunity viewers' gained the ability to actively participate in cultural life while 'casual viewers', otherwise theatrical laypeople frequently without previous theatrical experience, most often came across online performances while browsing the web.

'The accessibility of online performances allows us to attract new viewers who, even if they do not decide to see a given performance live, will take the time to get to learn about it remotely, which also translates into increased visibility of a given production. This is one of the arguments for maintaining online access to selected productions also after the epidemic has ended', says Kietlińska.⁷ Her finding is confirmed by Buchner *et al.*, who observe that the majority of the audiences studied expressed their desire for theatre to 'have a permanent place in the internet', arguing

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid.

7 B. Kietlińska, *Kiedy skończy się kwarantanna...*, op. cit., p. 25.

that this is due to the inclusive and democratic nature of online theatre, which reaches new audiences and causes ‘a kind of intellectual ferment’.⁸

We have already quoted some data regarding theatre accessibility during the pandemic. However, this topic is important also in terms of activities aimed directly at people with disabilities. In 2018, the ‘Theatre-Dance-Disability’ project was launched in cooperation with the British Council in Poland and the Institute of Music and Dance (since 2021 known as the National Institute of Music and Dance). It is dedicated to the presence of professional artists with disabilities in the world of art – in the circulation of works of art and in cultural institutions. Over the several years of the project’s implementation, multiple events have been held with the aim of creating opportunities for artists with disabilities to develop, draw attention to their presence in the artistic community and initiate a discussion on the professionalisation of this sector:

1. On 8-10 June 2018, the inaugural event, ‘Sign of the Times’, took place at the Theatre Institute and included a meeting with Jenny Sealey, Ben Evans and Claire Lamont, dedicated to theatre and the culture of the Deaf and hard of hearing in the United Kingdom (UK), as well as workshops conducted by Jenny Sealey with EJ Raymond and Petre Dobre, two students of performance in British Sign Language and in English at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, dedicated to theatre projects featuring the deaf and hard of hearing and people without hearing impairments, using sign language on stage. The event offered Polish Sign Language (PJM) interpretation.
2. Organised on 4-5 April 2019, the conference ‘Art and Disability: Crossing Borders’ concerned increased accessibility for and the activity of people with disabilities – both artists and audiences – in culture and art. The two-day meeting provided an opportunity to discuss the situation in Poland and the UK, and look at barriers, challenges and opportunities for change. The conference featured speakers such as Claire Cunningham (choreographer and dancer), Jo Verent (producer of the Unlimited Festival) and Marcus Dickey-Horley (accessibility programme curator at Tate Modern), as well as representatives of the Culture Without Barriers Foundation, Teatr 21, Zachęta – National Gallery of Art, the ZAMEK Cultural Centre in Poznań, and the Silesian Museum in Katowice. Attended by approx.

8 A. Buchner, K. Fereniec-Błońska, K. Kalinowska, M. Wierzbicka, *Obecność teatrów w przestrzeni...*, op. cit., p. 84.

250 people, the event was co-organised by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage.

3. A group of 20 artists with disabilities who qualified for the 'Artists and Disabilities' project, a series of meetings in which participants exchange their experiences regarding work in the field of art, has been active since November 2019. Initially, the group met together face-to-face, but during the pandemic, between March and June 2020, their meetings were held online. In addition, a meeting was organised with the British artist Claire Cunningham, who talked with the group about her history and how she developed her own method of working. She also shared her views on the situation of artists with disabilities in Poland. This meeting strengthened the group's decision to prepare a manifesto regarding their situation in Poland and define steps for the coming years.

All events offered PJM interpretation. In addition, the Institute of Music and Dance pursued its own activities within the project. All activities were implemented as part of the international project 'Europe Beyond Access' by the British Council.

Another area of the Institute's activities aimed at artists with disabilities is the production and co-production of their performances. Two initiatives are of particular importance:

4. On 14 November 2019, the institute hosted the premiere of the concert/ performance *Zastanawiam się...* [I Wonder...] directed by Joanna Pawlik, which was the winning project in the fourth edition of the 'Placówka' [Institution] programme. The theatre project competition aims to enable artists and artistic groups with limited options of long-term collaboration to conduct research on new theatre forms and language. The regulations of the fourth edition reflected and emphasised the institute's interest in organising projects in which artists work with people with disabilities. The winning project complied with the inclusion requirement and involved mainly artists with disabilities: the author invited artists with speech, motor, hearing and vision impairments to participate in the project. The final event was a polyphonic record of numerous forms of oppression and exclusion experienced by people with different types of disabilities in everyday life. The performing collective was composed of: Edward Gil-Deskur (DJ, performer), Klaudia Kwiecień (performer), Wiktor Okrój (songwriter, performer), Paulina Owczarek (saxophonist), Ernest Ogórek (bassist), Joanna Pawlik, Elżbieta Szurpicka (set designer), Dorota Wach (performer), Agata Wąsik (performer), and Liliana Zieniawa (drummer).

5. In 2021, the family show *Jak przestałem być idealny* [How I Stopped Being Perfect] directed by Justyna Sobczyk was produced in cooperation with the Teatr 21 Foundation as part of the 'Lato w teatrze' [Summer in the Theatre] programme, which premiered on 4 September 2021. It was prepared by actors from Teatr 21 (artists with Down Syndrome) as well as professional musicians and circus performers. The show was inspired by the myth of the elephant-headed Hindu god Ganesha and the true story of Joseph Merrick, also known as the Elephant Man. With young viewers in mind, the artists presented stories of people forced to struggle with lack of acceptance. In this live music performance, questions about otherness and diversity were juxtaposed with breath-taking feats of acrobats, and humour that reflected on why one should refrain from judging others, labelling them, and forcing them into certain roles. The premiere of the show marked the second decade of artistic and educational performances in a circus tent in towns and places without theatre halls. In future years, the performance will be shown all over Poland. It will be adapted to the needs of people with disabilities (with mobility impairment, but it will also feature an induction loop and subtitles), and it is our hope that it will become generally accessible for all members of local communities.

PROJECTS INVOLVING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AS PART OF THE 'SUMMER IN THE THEATRE' PROGRAMME

Last but not least, we would like to discuss the participation of people with disabilities in the 'Summer in the Theatre' programme, an important grant programme implemented by the institute. Developed in 2008 in response to the need for greater theatre activity during the summer holidays, the programme evolved into a grant competition addressed to local-government cultural institutions and NGOs – institutions interested in organising theatre workshops for children and teenagers during the school summer break and then presenting their results on stage. The regulations stipulated that activities implemented with the partial participation of disadvantaged groups, i.e. people with disabilities and people living in areas with the lowest GDP, would be promoted. Since then, approximately 40 projects have been co-financed every year, with many of them in smaller towns.

The topic, type of artistic activities and working methods are chosen by people invited by applicants to cooperate, with participants' needs and interests in mind. Activities can be conducted by full-time employees of theatre institutions, members of theatre groups, cultural animators, theatre instructors, artists, students at art schools, musicians, and journalists. Giving voice to children and teenagers, the instructors act as guides and guardians during the two-week workshops to help them find their form of artistic expression on topics important to them.

The number of project proposals promoting the inclusion of people with disabilities, both as participants and project leaders, has risen every year. An increasing number of applications is recommended for implementation by the Steering Team, whose composition changes regularly – in the last two editions of the programme (2020 and 2021), analysed for the purposes of this text, such proposals accounted for approximately one quarter of the co-financed projects. When assessing the applications, our specialists made sure that projects were inclusive and clearly described the ideas for including people with disabilities in the workshops and providing them with the assistance of specialised staff. Such an approach can effectively integrate all participants in the group, while creating a comfortable space for theatre activities and truly prevent social isolation. For this reason, most initiatives are addressed at groups in which participants with disabilities (primarily with Autism Spectrum Disorder, including Asperger Syndrome, and with intellectual impairments, most often Down Syndrome) account for a small percentage of the group. As a result, they can be fully included in the team. The workshops themselves have a universal theme (the protagonists in Astrid Lindgren's books such as *Emil of Lönneberga* or *Pippi Longstocking* in the Community Centre in Strzelno in 2020, or the Odra River like in the case of the Wrocław Puppet Theatre and the [OnWater.pl](https://onwater.pl) Foundation from Wrocław in 2021). Other projects involve a much larger group of people with disabilities, with disability as the leitmotif of the activities. This was the case with the Ditero Foundation project from 2020 entitled 'The Heroes' Spectrum' whose organisers described in the following words:

To decode the name of our project: Spectrum because our participants are children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), and Heroes because everyone can be a hero (to themselves, to a classmate, to a friend next door). An important element of the project was the use of Prof. Philip Zimbardo's method (Heroic Imagination Project), which shows that good re-

sides in all of us and can be found by exploring the mechanisms of the human mind. (...) This approach had a tremendous therapeutic value for children with ASD. On a daily basis, children on the spectrum hardly ever make decisions. Typically, decisions are made for them by a caregiver or a therapist. During the 'Summer in the Theatre', they gained autonomy otherwise unknown to them, and they felt understood and safe.⁹

Another significant group of projects are those in which people with disabilities can be found among both participants and project leaders. This is most often the case in projects for children and teenagers who are deaf or hard of hearing and Children of Deaf Adults (CODA), e.g. the Kraków-Nowa Huta Cultural Centre with its projects from 2020 and 2021, and the CRICOTEKA Centre for the Documentation of the Art of Tadeusz Kantor in Kraków, which in 2020 collaborated with the Migawka Foundation. Another interesting example of this approach was the project of the TIFF Collective Foundation from 2020, whose organisers shared the following reflection:

'All That Is Impossible in the World' is a theatre and art project for children and teenagers with and without disabilities. Our focus was on integration both among participants and project leaders. The cooperation between the TIFF Collective Foundation and the Arka Theatre allowed us to build an artistic team with experienced artists as leaders and actors with disabilities as their assistants. We wanted to create a world that takes into account the needs of every person involved in the project, a barrier-free space where the word 'impossible' essentially loses its meaning.¹⁰

During the two years that were analysed, there was one initiative where people with disabilities were only on the side of the project leaders. The 'Theatre Solfege' project was carried out at the 'Invisible Street' exhibition in Poznań in 2021 by the Łazarz – Zakorzenia w Tradycji [Łazarz – Rooted in Tradition] Association. The workshops began with blind guides showing children around the 'Invisible Street' exhibition. The guides were later in charge of the music workshops. The theme was sounds, and the objective was to awaken young people's sensitivity to the audio sphere.

9 Materials from the Archive of the 'Summer in the Theatre' programme, p. 64, see: http://latowteatrze.pl/assets/media/Lato_w_teatrze_2020/Archiwum_LwT_2020.pdf [accessed: 15 October 2021].

10 Ibid., p. 14.

Relatively similar in nature, the project by community centre in Ujazd was based on the assumption that young people are afraid of contact with people with disabilities. The participants were offered an opportunity to overcome their fear, largely caused by their lack of knowledge and the isolation of people with disabilities from the external world. They spent time with deaf volunteers who taught them the fundamentals of Polish Sign Language, which was later used in a show about a deaf girl in the 1990s, who joined a cheerleading team at her school on an equal footing with other members.

Finally, it is worth highlighting that, based on our observations, people with mobility impairment are involved in projects least frequently. It happens only where the necessary infrastructure is available, mainly in larger cities. This area undoubtedly requires more attention and support.

We have taken this opportunity to analyse projects involving people with disabilities within one of our programmes, hoping that it will inspire reflection among the organisers of other cultural programmes. In the coming years, this picture will indisputably become increasingly richer and will feature initiatives of an even more experimental nature, promoting the agency of people with disabilities.

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PROTECTION OF MONUMENTS AND THE OBLIGATION TO ENSURE ACCESSIBILITY FOR PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

National Institute of Cultural Heritage

THE PROTECTION OF MONUMENTS IN THE FACE OF CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES

When attempting to evaluate the state of Polish culture in terms of accessibility, one cannot disregard monuments. While we are aware that the analysis of relationships between ‘culture’, ‘cultural heritage’ and ‘monument’ could result in a volume much larger than that of a regular PhD thesis, these concepts cannot be considered separately regardless of the adopted definitions. Although important, monuments are hardly the only aspect of cultural heritage, and cultural heritage – the constructed memory of the past – forms an indispensable component of every society’s culture.¹

For the purposes of the following analysis, let us focus on a selected group of monuments that are under legal protection pursuant to the Act

1 K. Kowalski, *Od zabytku do dyskursu. O kilku źródłach współczesnej definicji dziedzictwa* [From monument to discourse. On several sources of the contemporary definition of heritage], *Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Prace Etnograficzne* 2017, vol. 45, No. 1, pp. 1–14.

on the protection and preservation of monuments.² It is the mission of the Polish state, as well as the duty of citizens, to protect and preserve the cultural heritage, as we are 'obliged to bequeath to future generations all that is valuable from our over one thousand years' heritage'³, including monuments which, as a result, are protected by law. The statutory definition describes a monument as 'real estate or a movable, their parts or complexes, which are the work of human beings or are connected with their activity, constituting a testimony of the past epoch or event, the preservation of which is in the public interest due to its historical, artistic or scientific value'.⁴ While Poland's system of monument protection focuses on preserving the values of the testimony to the bygone era, this mechanism does not operate in isolation from surrounding reality.

The evolution of the system driven, for example, by people's understanding of 'social interest' and adopting models developed as part of the global concepts of protection (UNESCO World Heritage), leads to the incorporation of conditions acknowledged as socially important.⁵ For this reason, the protection of monuments increasingly includes the need to consider conditions such as climate policy or accessibility. Reconciling the protection paradigm with the implementation of new conditions poses a particularly demanding challenge for conservation services and monument protection policy in Poland.

- 2 Act of 23 July 2003 on the protection and preservation of monuments (Journal of Laws 2021, items 710, 954), Online Database of Polish Legislation (in Polish: *Internetowy System Aktów Prawnych*, ISAP), <https://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU20031621568> [accessed: 25 August 2021].
- 3 Preamble to the Constitution of the Republic of Poland of 2 April 1997 (Journal of Laws 1997, No. 78, item 483; Journal of Laws 2001, No. 28, item 319; Journal of Laws 2006, No. 200, item 1471; Journal of Laws 2009 No. 114, item 946), Online Database of Polish Legislation, <http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU19970780483> (English version: <https://www.sejm.gov.pl/prawo/konst/angielski/kon1.htm>) [accessed: 25 August 2021].
- 4 Article 3.1 of the Act of 23 July 2003 on the protection and preservation of monuments (Journal of Laws of 2021, items 710, 954).
- 5 *System ochrony zabytków w Polsce – diagnoza, analiza, propozycje* [The system of monument protection in Poland: Diagnosis, analysis, proposals], B. Szmygin (Ed.), Warsaw-Lublin 2011.

FORMAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ENSURING ACCESSIBILITY ON HISTORICAL SITES

In addition to documents on human and civil rights, which clearly prohibit discrimination against people regardless of differences, it is necessary to also consider the international and national legal acts that govern issues related to accessibility.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, adopted on 13 December 2006 in New York, is of fundamental importance in this regard. Poland ratified it on 25 October 2012.⁶ The Convention defines actions to be taken by states to ensure that people with disabilities have access to the physical environment, transport, information, communication, and all services provided to society by both public and private entities. It recommends the accommodation of historical sites to the needs of persons with disabilities as far as possible, while taking into account the limitations and value of these sites (Articles 2, 30). Following Article 9 of the Convention, which refers to its implementation through adopting appropriate standards at the national level, Poland introduced its own statutory regulations in this area.

The legal framework for accessibility is stipulated in the Act of 19 July 2019 on ensuring accessibility for people with special needs.⁷ While this document does not focus on the specificity of historical sites, it outlines the conditions that put such places under pressure for the necessary changes. The Act effectively obliges all parties to ensure the accessibility of historical sites that are in the public domain, serve public functions and are financed from public funds. In parallel, the said Act entails an amend-

6 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, New York, 13 December 2006 (Journal of Laws 2012, item 1169), Online Database of Polish Legislation, <https://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU20120001169>, (English version: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-2.html>) [accessed: 25 August 2021].

7 Act of 19 July 2019 on ensuring accessibility for people with special needs (Journal of Laws 2019, item 1696), Online Database of Polish Legislation, <http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU20190001696> [accessed: 25 August 2021].

ment to the Act on the protection and preservation of monuments, whose Article 25.1 now has the following wording:

*The development for usability purposes of an immovable monument entered into the register requires its owner or holder to have the conservation documentation specifying the state of preservation of the immovable monument and the possibility of its adaptation, taking into account the historical function and value of the monument, as well as the possibility of its accommodation for people with special needs, referred to in the Act of 19 July 2019 on ensuring accessibility for people with special needs.*⁸

These stipulations are further elaborated on in the Government Programme 'Accessibility Plus', which indicates that this objective can be achieved by:

*improving the accessibility of cultural sites, including historical ones, by combining individual architectural solutions (in consultation with the inspector of monuments) with the use of modern technological solutions, information standards, and applicable operating procedures.*⁹

The cited legal acts are an extremely important factor that will shape people's attitude towards historical sites as well as the need to respond to social expectations in this regard.

BARRIERS AND ACCESSIBILITY LIMITATIONS ON HISTORICAL SITES

Historical sites are protected because they are a testimony to a bygone era or event, and they carry significant historical, artistic or scientific value.¹⁰ As a result, a fundamental conflict of values and options for action may arise in the perspective of ensuring accessibility. In some cases, it may turn out that the lack of accommodations for people with special needs is a characteristic feature of a given site dictated by the historical

8 Act of 23 July 2003 on the protection..., op. cit., (Journal of Laws 2020, item 1062).

9 Government Programme 'Accessibility Plus 2018–2025', p. 50, https://archiwum.ncbr.gov.pl/fileadmin/POIR/3_1_1_1_2019/Dok_dodatkowe/16_Program_Dostepnosc_Plus.pdf [accessed: 25 August 2021].

10 K. Zalasńska, K. Zeidler, *Wykład prawa ochrony zabytków* [Lecture on the law of monument protection], Warsaw 2015.

period in which it was erected. For example, access to defensive structures was limited or hindered on purpose (e.g. narrow spiral staircases in medieval defensive buildings or the placement and shape of entrances in 20th-century fortifications). Sometimes the lack of adaptation is thus closely related to the historical or scientific value of the site. Moreover, one can easily imagine a situation where additional technical elements fitted to improve the site's accessibility could interfere with the artistic value and the overall composition of the site.

Nevertheless, the contemporary understanding of social interest, the cited legal regulations and the principle of sustainable development leave no doubt that the issue of access should also be resolved in such cases. This requires a great design culture and a thorough understanding of the historical site that is to be made accessible. Many positive examples can be found, particularly in the case of historical buildings used for museum purposes. The modernised Princes Czartoryski Museum in Kraków or a more intimate manor house – the castle in Szymbark – can serve as examples of effective and compositionally well-thought-out adaptations. Properly fitted lifts, floor markings or tactile exhibition sets are only a few of museum treatments to improve accessibility. The anticipated scale of difficulties and limitations related to the specificity of legally protected historical sites should be offset by a bank of good practices – hence the idea of collecting and promoting examples of accessibility solutions implemented with respect for historical values.

It seems justified to strive for 'templates' or examples of good practices – accessibility solutions for crucial typological groups of monuments (e.g. churches, tenement houses, theatres). However, it should be remembered that the underlying doctrinal directive for the protection of monuments is that each site requires an individual assessment of its value and conservation specifications. Therefore, the application of every model solution must in each case be preceded by a risk analysis in regard to a possible loss of historical value.

THE SPECTRUM OF MONUMENTS AND THE SCALE OF ACCOMMODATIONS NEEDED

Based on the statistical data regarding the number and types of monuments in Poland, one can easily notice that the scale of accommodations

needed to ensure accessibility for people with special needs is considerable. It is estimated that approx. 80 000 monuments (77 996¹¹) are under protection as sites and objects entered into the Register of Monuments. In this group, objects that are in the public domain, serve public functions and are financed from public funds are absolutely obliged to comply with the accessibility provisions. Tables 1 and 2 present the typology of immovable monuments (Table 1) and historical areas/layouts/complexes classified as 'area entries' in the register of monuments (hereinafter: area monuments; Table 2) as of 31 December 2020. Differences in their profiles have a fundamental impact on the types and intensity of problems faced in terms of their accommodation for people with special needs. Public service buildings belong to the group for which accessibility accommodations are mandatory. This largely applies to residential buildings, defensive, industrial and religious objects, which frequently perform exhibition functions, are adapted for sightseeing or house public service institutions, and whose renovations are financed from public funds. Small architecture and residential buildings are affected to varying degrees, as some of them are private property or privately used sites. The situation of storage buildings, workshops and other buildings and structures largely depends on the current functional and spatial context. In the case of area monuments (Table 2), the highest level of requirements applies to publicly accessible compositions of historical greenery, cemeteries, memorial sites. To a varying degree, this problem is also present in residential complexes, religious complexes and on historical communication routes, in industrial complexes, storage and workshop complexes nowadays operating as museums as well as workplaces.

Yet a different approach to accessibility must be adopted in the case of large-scale cultural landscapes and urban and rural layouts. The problem seems to be easily solvable for the surroundings of a monument entered into the Register of Monuments (hereinafter: registered monument), which in themselves hardly ever represent any historical value, but rather serve to protect the monument from a negative visual (aesthetic) and environmental impact. While highlighting the typological diversity of monuments in Poland, the tables below can also be viewed as a harbinger of a variety of problems to be faced with in connection with accessibility.

11 Data by the National Institute of Cultural Heritage – as of 31 December 2020.

TABLE 1. ARCHITECTURAL MONUMENTS ENTERED INTO THE REGISTER OF MONUMENTS – BY CATEGORY AND VOIVODESHIP
(AS OF 31 DECEMBER 2020)

SPECIFICATION	SMALL ARCHITECTURE	RELIGIOUS	RESIDENCES	DEFENSIVE STRUCTURES	PUBLIC SERVICE	RESIDENTIAL	STORAGE AND WORKSHOPS	INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS	OTHER BUILDINGS	OTHER STRUCTURES	IN TOTAL:
POLAND	445	13 171	4 954	1 989	5 007	20 958	5 072	2 171	327	4 957	59 051
DOLNOŚLĄSKIE	62	1 470	668	261	683	2 580	635	294	46	486	7 185
KUJAWSKO-POMORSKIE	6	528	333	155	253	625	255	126	12	245	2 538
LUBELSKIE	57	878	272	130	212	665	243	69	14	340	2 880
LUBUSKIE	24	563	221	160	193	2 393	252	104	8	173	4 091
ŁÓDZKIE	23	568	282	44	181	673	152	151	15	124	2 213
MAŁOPOLSKIE	47	1 110	308	162	377	1 590	369	67	15	718	4 763
MAZOWIECKIE	52	1 081	547	153	606	2 171	349	263	24	451	5 697
OPOLSKIE	11	669	159	89	161	1 140	205	76	23	251	2 784
PODKARPACKIE	45	1 170	218	195	272	1 350	293	65	9	363	3 980
PODLASKIE	6	548	76	17	155	636	123	69	8	136	1 774
POMORSKIE	17	530	224	165	289	955	335	121	44	272	2 952
ŚLĄSKIE	17	641	176	70	419	1 665	285	162	19	284	3 738
ŚWIĘTOKRZYSKIE	18	447	115	46	80	217	73	48	11	137	1 192
WARMIŃSKO-MAZURSKIE	16	894	291	162	312	2 156	571	167	25	299	4 893
WIELKOPOLSKIE	31	1 161	797	73	499	1 740	714	274	41	355	5 685
ZACHODNIOPOMORSKIE	13	913	267	107	315	402	218	115	13	323	2 686

Source: National Institute of Cultural Heritage

TABLE 2. HISTORICAL AREAS/LAYOUTS/COMPLEXES ENTERED INTO THE REGISTER OF MONUMENTS - BY CATEGORY AND VOIVODESHIP (AS OF 31 DECEMBER 2020)

SPECIFICATION	RESIDENCE COMPLEXES	RELIGIOUS COMPLEXES	INDUSTRIAL COMPLEXES	STORAGE AND WORKSHOP COMPLEXES	OTHER HISTORICAL COMPLEXES	CULTURAL LANDSCAPES	MONUMENT SURROUND- INGS	COMMUNICA- TION ROUTES	URBAN LAYOUTS	HISTORICAL GREENERY	CEMETERIES	MEMORIAL SITES	IN TOTAL:
POLAND	658	800	324	435	2 729	84	1 103	97	1 021	7 545	4 127	22	18 945
DOLNOŚLĄSKIE	92	21	31	76	146	5	29	4	133	828	339		1 704
KUJAWSKO-POMORSKIE	55	58	16	29	272	5	25	6	21	415	139		1 041
LUBELSKIE	63	94	6	14	218	13	43	9	43	597	323	1	1 424
LUBUSKIE	43	19	19	34	76	3	38	1	36	205	64		538
ŁÓDZKIE	7	9	26	4	57	4	48	3	34	392	140		724
MAŁOPOLSKIE	30	41	9	24	314	10	141	15	60	450	360	3	1 457
MAZOWIECKIE	52	54	38	15	321	3	225	9	136	939	377	8	2 177
OPOLSKIE	23	10	7	23	89	6	12	6	32	236	124		568
PODKARPACKIE	30	169	7	19	206	6	61	7	52	394	281		1 232
PODLASKIE	5	46	9	4	77	3	8	2	66	111	312		643
POMORSKIE	22	14	22	19	166	3	16	4	57	285	118	2	728
ŚLĄSKIE	34	42	41	16	93	3	62	6	68	208	76	3	652
ŚWIĘTOKRZYSKIE	29	112	14	9	112	11	8	3	35	226	187	2	748
WARMIŃSKO-MAZURSKIE	28	14	26	38	128	4	161	7	63	447	602	1	1 519
WIELKOPOLSKIE	86	91	30	90	303	4	59	6	132	1 045	348		2 194
ZACHODNIOPOMORSKIE	59	6	23	21	151	1	167	9	53	767	337	2	1 596

Source: National Institute of Cultural Heritage

Given such a differentiation (even if slightly generalised here), it becomes clear that it is not enough to develop a single procedure plan that would apply to all cases. Instead, there is a need for a general system adaptable to the individual characteristics of each site.

Table 3 highlights an even broader underlying problem. While presenting the monument ownership structure, it emphasises the scale of the task, much larger than one could anticipate, because some historical sites are listed in local (municipal) registers of monuments. The latter are lists of both registered monuments, entered into municipal registers of monuments by virtue of the law, and other objects of historical nature included in these registers pursuant to a decision of the commune (municipality; in Polish: *gmina*), town or city mayor in agreement with the competent inspector of monuments. Given the evolution of the monument protection system, inventories of monuments are gaining increasingly stronger ground and are thus emerging as another form of protection. As a result, the process of ensuring accessibility for people with special needs faces limitations due to the historical as well as compositional nature of the objects. In parallel, the table shows the statistical ownership structure for monuments. In this perspective, monuments administered by state agencies, local government units and other public legal persons must be made accessible. In the case of churches, religious associations and other non-public legal persons or natural persons, the extent to which a monument must be made accessible is determined by the manner of its use and its purpose.

It should be emphasised that there are no statistics or comprehensive studies that would determine the adaptation scope of monuments in terms of their accessibility for people with special needs. While the statutory Accessibility Compliance Report Form focuses on determining the entity obliged to report on the accessibility status, it does not – although it perhaps should – include the information whether this entity uses monuments that are subject to legal protection. In the current form, such information can only be offered voluntarily in the section *Comments and remarks on architectural accessibility*, or in the alternative access explanations.

TABLE 3. IMMOVABLE MONUMENTS INCLUDED IN MUNICIPAL REGISTERS OF MONUMENTS - BY OWNER

SPECIFICATION	IMMOVABLE MONUMENTS								
	TOTAL	STATE TREASURY	LOCAL GOVERN- MENT UNITS	OTHER PUBLIC LEGAL PERSON	CHURCH OR RELIGIOUS ASSOCIATION	OTHER NON-PUBLIC LEGAL PERSON	NATURAL PERSON	MIXED OWNERSHIP	NO DATA/ OWNER NOT SPECIFIED
POLAND	409 773	11 296	26 194	5 104	21 785	5 584	137 359	23 744	178 707
Cities with powiat status	103 215	1 373	3 453	676	1 324	1 520	9 222	5 984	79 663
Urban gminas	52 801	1 745	5 457	941	1 754	950	17 679	6 210	18 065
Urban-rural gminas	126 032	4 007	9 182	1 934	7 607	1 859	51 331	9 060	41 052
Rural gminas	127 725	4 171	8 102	1 553	11 100	1 255	59 127	2 490	39 927
DOLNOŚLĄSKIE	69 133	845	2 796	309	1 482	358	14 809	4 037	44 497
KUJAWSKO-POMORSKIE	24 270	791	1 610	272	1 098	368	8 191	2 256	9 684
LUBELSKIE	11 967	727	1 809	223	1 827	237	5 179	476	1 489
LUBUSKIE	12 733	321	552	609	386	267	4 341	3 136	3 121
ŁÓDZKIE	12 051	505	1 600	132	1 636	462	4 906	1 081	1 729
MAŁOPOLSKIE	31 462	476	1 162	223	1 416	419	11 926	480	15 360
MAZOWIECKIE	29 921	738	1 788	267	2 167	251	9 882	499	14 329
OPOLSKIE	23 251	324	1 145	299	1 330	374	8 761	1 546	9 472
PODKARPACKIE	17 527	372	1 626	275	1 567	188	8 604	557	4 338
PODLASKIE	4 686	302	532	64	875	47	2 199	261	406
POMORSKIE	36 577	844	1 850	445	946	244	11 351	1 590	19 307
ŚLĄSKIE	35 811	825	2 319	649	1 570	1 052	9 023	2 116	18 257
ŚWIĘTOKRZYSKIE	4 563	202	533	89	910	71	1 468	445	845
WARMIŃSKO-MAZURSKIE	23 609	993	1 954	178	799	196	8 249	1 693	9 547
WIELKOPOLSKIE	48 718	2 027	3 316	790	2 963	792	21 193	2 022	15 615
ZACHODNIOPOMORSKIE	23 494	1 004	1 602	280	813	258	7 277	1 549	10 711

Source: *Ochrona zabytków i opieka nad zabytkami w samorządzie gminnym. Raport z realizacji badania* [Study Report: Protection and preservation of monuments by self-government], Statistics Poland, Warsaw 2020 (unpublished).

For the purposes of this publication, a survey was conducted among the guardians of Historical Monuments (in Polish: *Pomniki Historii*) regarding the accessibility of these unique historical objects and complexes for people with special needs.

The Historical Monument label is one of the five forms of monument protection listed in the Act of 2003 on the protection and preservation of monuments. It refers to an immovable monument of particular importance to Poland's culture. The rank of this title is emphasised by the fact that it is issued by the President of the Republic of Poland in a special regulation at the request of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage.

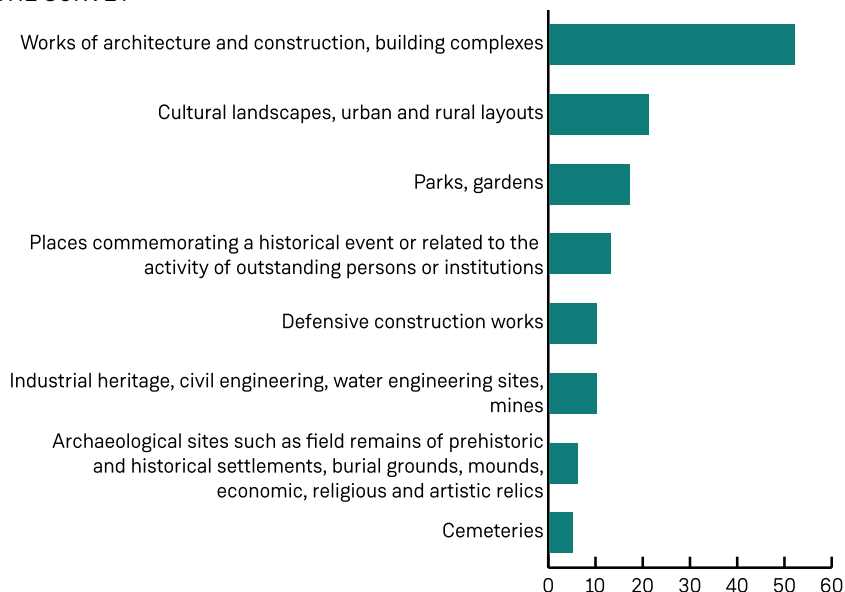
The title has been thus far awarded to 114 monuments. It is a highly heterogeneous group that comprises entire parts of cities, parks, gardens, cemeteries, one- and multi-storey buildings, and historical mines. While varied, this sample selection is hardly representative of the list's diversity as each of its objects deserves a detailed analysis on its own.

The survey was conducted between 28 July and 3 August 2021, collecting 75 responses with information on 56 Historical Monuments.

Figure 1 presents the types of Historical Monuments or fragments thereof whose guardians took part in the survey. When analysing the chart, one should bear in mind that historical complexes frequently consist of many different types of elements and, consequently, may be listed, for example, as both 'works of architecture and construction, building complexes' and 'parks, gardens'.

The vast majority of Historical Monuments, by virtue of their status, are publicly accessible sites/objects or complexes (e.g. churches or museums). The analysis of accessibility declarations (Figure 2) clearly reveals greater awareness in terms of ensuring accessibility for people with reduced mobility, i.e. people with mobility impairment (using wheelchairs, crutches or walkers, with partial paralysis or limb paresis), the elderly with mobility issues, obese people, people of short stature, people with injuries, pregnant women, and other people who move with difficulty (e.g. people with hypertension). It is mainly for this group of people that various special accommodations have been provided (approx. 70% of the analysed cases). Figure 3 shows accommodations in Historical Monuments implemented for people with reduced mobility, with toilets adapted to the needs of people using wheelchairs as well as platforms, ramps and driveways listed

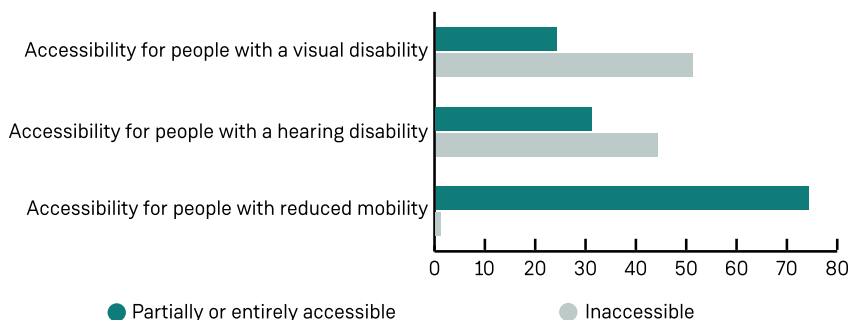
FIGURE 1. TYPES OF HISTORICAL MONUMENTS WHOSE GUARDIANS PARTICIPATED IN THE SURVEY



N = 75, Question: What kind of a historical object/complex is the Historical Monument under your care?

Source: National Institute of Cultural Heritage, 2021

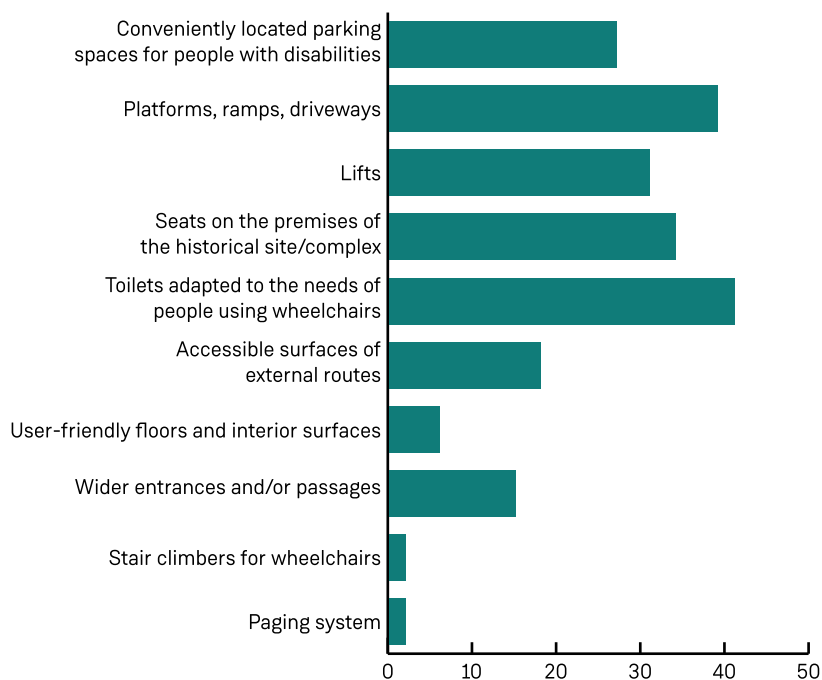
FIGURE 2. ACCESSIBILITY OF HISTORICAL MONUMENTS FOR PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS



N = 75, Questions: 1. Is the Historical Monument under your care accessible to people with reduced mobility, i.e. people with mobility impairment (using wheelchairs, crutches or walkers, with partial paralysis or limb paresis, the elderly with mobility issues, obese people, people of short stature, people with injuries, pregnant women, and other people who move with difficulty (e.g. people with hypertension)? 2. Is the Historical Monument under your care accessible to people with a visual disability? 3. Is the Historical Monument under your care accessible to people with a hearing disability?

Source: National Institute of Cultural Heritage, 2021

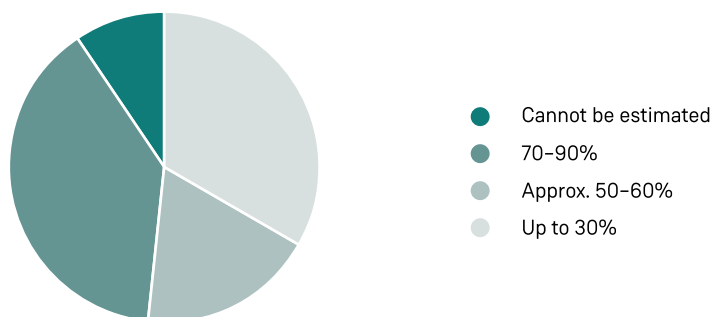
FIGURE 3. ACCOMMODATIONS IN HISTORICAL MONUMENTS FOR PEOPLE WITH REDUCED MOBILITY



N = 52, Question: What accommodations have been implemented for people with reduced mobility?

Source: National Institute of Cultural Heritage, 2021

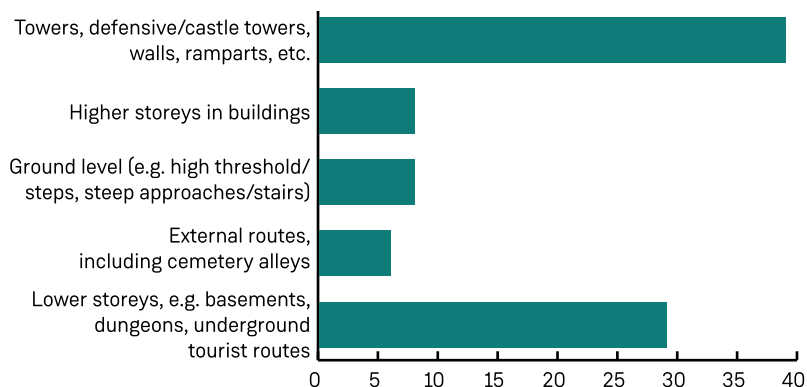
FIGURE 4. PARTIAL ACCESSIBILITY OF HISTORICAL MONUMENTS FOR PEOPLE WITH REDUCED MOBILITY (IN %)



N = 54, Question: What percentage of the Historical Monument is accessible to people with reduced mobility?

Source: National Institute of Cultural Heritage, 2021

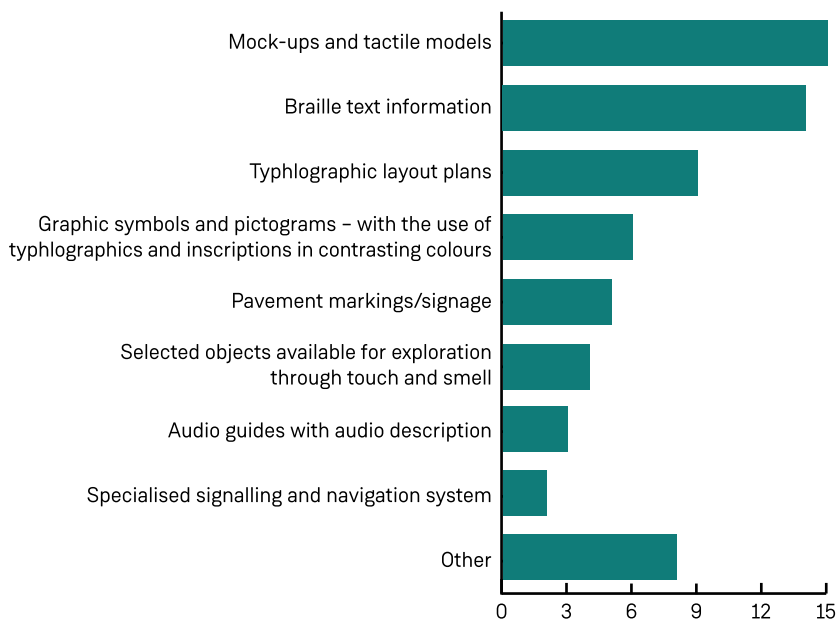
FIGURE 5. MOST FREQUENTLY INACCESSIBLE PARTS OF HISTORICAL MONUMENTS FOR PEOPLE WITH REDUCED MOBILITY



N = 54, Question: Which parts of historical sites/complexes are primarily inaccessible to people with reduced mobility?

Source: National Institute of Cultural Heritage, 2021

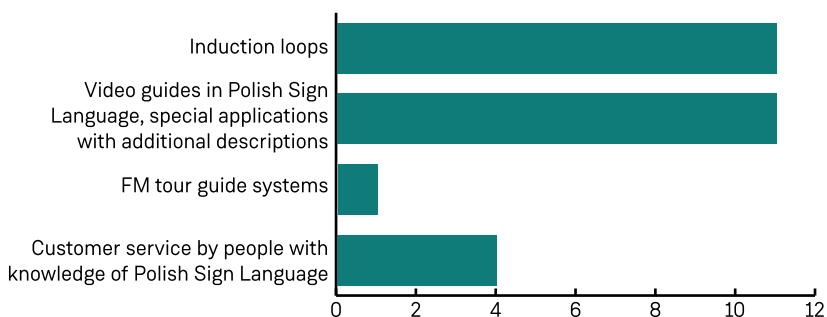
FIGURE 6. ACCOMMODATIONS IN HISTORICAL MONUMENTS FOR PEOPLE WITH A VISUAL DISABILITY



N = 24, Question: What elements have been implemented to facilitate the navigation of the historical site/complex and the transmission of information for people with a visual disability?

Source: National Institute of Cultural Heritage, 2021

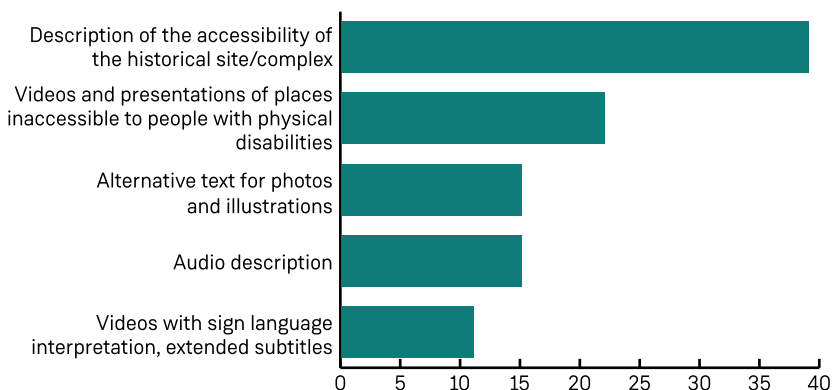
FIGURE 7. ACCOMMODATIONS IN HISTORICAL MONUMENTS FOR PEOPLE WITH A HEARING DISABILITY



N = 20, Question: What elements have been implemented to facilitate the transmission of information for people with a hearing disability?

Source: National Institute of Cultural Heritage, 2021

FIGURE 8. TYPES OF MATERIALS ON THE WEBSITES OF HISTORICAL MONUMENTS DEDICATED TO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES



N = 60, Question: What types of materials dedicated to people with disabilities are available on the website?

Source: National Institute of Cultural Heritage, 2021

most frequently. This group of people can move independently without the need for an assistant in 50% of the accessible historic sites/complexes.

Nevertheless, it should be borne in mind that a significant part (73%) of Historical Monuments accessible to people with reduced mobility is accessible only partially, for example, only in 10%. Figure 4 shows the partial

accessibility of Historical Monuments for people with reduced mobility (in %). Most of these sites and complexes (39%) are accessible in as much as 70–90%; however, a fairly large group (33%) is accessible only in up to 30%. Typically inaccessible are both higher and lower storeys, towers, walls and ramparts, but sometimes the ground floor level with very high thresholds can also pose a significant problem (Figure 5).

In comparison, accessibility for people with a visual or hearing disability is lower. Despite the relatively high declarations in this respect, actual accommodations for these groups are available in 32% and 27% of the analysed cases respectively (Figures 6 and 7). Other declarations of accessibility were based on the general statement of the ‘possibility to see the site/complex’, for example, with an assistant or a guide for people with a visual disability, or the ‘possibility to read’ the descriptions, guides and maps for people with a hearing disability. The blind and people with visual impairments can move around the historical sites/buildings and complexes on their own only in a few cases.

The least studied topic, however, is the accessibility of Historical Monuments for people with other types of disabilities, such as Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) or intellectual disability. Out of all respondents, 24% declared their readiness in this area – primarily museums with properly trained staff and offering special educational activities.

Approximately 80% of the studied Historical Monuments have websites; however, only 28% of them comply with the WCAG 2.1 standard and are therefore recognised as digitally accessible to people with disabilities. Nevertheless, many of the websites contain materials that can be used by people with disabilities such as virtual sightseeing of places inaccessible to people with reduced mobility or audio description (Figure 8).

THE NATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR THE PROTECTION AND PRESERVATION OF MONUMENTS – TASKS OF THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

The National Programme for the Protection and Preservation of Monuments for 2019–2022 is a systemic response to the growing challenges of modernity and external interdependencies in the mechanisms of

monument protection.¹² Adopted by Resolution of the Council of Ministers No. 82 of 13 August 2019, the document is the main strategic study defining the objectives of the central administration, its agencies and institutions in the protection and preservation of monuments for the period of four years, whose implementation has been entrusted to the National Institute of Cultural Heritage.

The National Programme 2019–2022 is also one of the executive instruments of the Government Programme ‘Accessibility Plus 2018–2025’, implemented since 2018, in the field of improving the accessibility of historical objects (Action 25: Culture Without Barriers).¹³

In view of the above, in selected tasks implemented as part of the National Programme for the Protection and Preservation of Monuments, the topic of the accessibility of monuments or, more broadly, of cultural heritage for people with disabilities has been clearly indicated as one of the issues that deserve particular attention.

Accessibility is discussed in the context of tasks and competences of local government units as part of task 1.1.1. ‘Training courses for local government units and their designated staff in cultural heritage management, including spatial planning and accessibility for people with disabilities’, and task 1.1.2. ‘Development of the knowledge base about the protection of cultural heritage at the local, regional and central levels’.

In 2022, the Institute’s training platform will offer access to the training ‘Sharing cultural heritage with people with disabilities: Tasks and competences of municipal offices’, while the samorzad.nid.pl portal – to articles and opinions of experts and experienced practitioners. In addition, under task 1.1.3. ‘Substantive support for the planning and revitalisation processes in gminas’, our Competence Centres for Revitalisation support the development and implementation of revitalisation programmes in historical buildings/sites, with accessibility as a vital component.

12 National Programme for the Protection and Preservation of Monuments for 2019–2022, Official Journal of the Republic of Poland of 11 September 2019, item 808, Online Database of Polish Legislation, <http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/download.xsp/WMP20190000808/O/M20190808.pdf> [accessed: 26 August 2021].

13 Government Programme ‘Accessibility Plus 2018–2025’, https://www.funduszeuropejskie.gov.pl/media/97063/Program_Dostepnosc_Plus.pdf [accessed: 26 August 2021].

A social campaign is also planned for 2022 as part of task 3.1.1. 'Social and educational campaign in the mass media including the aspects of prevention in monument protection and preservation as well as monument accessibility for people with disabilities'.

However, the key task in this regard is 1.2.2. 'Evaluation of applied conservation standards and methods'. Its objective is to develop 'uniform standards of conservation treatments for selected types and categories of monuments in compliance with the applicable conservation doctrine'. An important issue included in this action is the development of monument accessibility standards for persons with disabilities. This task is implemented by the Institute in cooperation with the Foundation for Development at the Lublin University of Technology and the team supervised by Prof. Bogusław Szmygin. The completion of the work is planned for mid-2022. The objectives of the action are of a dual nature. First, they focus on the standardisation of operating procedures in the practice of monument inspectors and their offices. Secondly, they are to facilitate the selection of solutions that will ensure the accessibility of monuments for people with special needs, while recognising and respecting the paradigm of protecting the value of historical sites.

SUMMARY

This brief review and selected statistical data on the accessibility of monuments for people with special needs reveal the complexity and diversity of this topic.

The survey conducted among managers of Historical Monuments shows that we are at an early stage of the journey towards a better understanding and resolving the issue of the accessibility of monuments for people with special needs. It should be remembered that as Poland's most valuable historical sites and complexes, Historical Monuments are also the ones that are most carefully protected and financed. If the managers of objects of this class raise certain doubts regarding their accessibility for people with special needs, what can be expected from monuments of other categories? The selected sample of Historical Monuments may serve as a reference group illustrating the scale and dynamics of the problem. The results of the survey reveal a large disproportion in terms of both the adaptation of objects/historical complexes and their accessibility in

the respective spheres. A clear differentiation also emerges depending on the type of specific needs. One can assume that in many cases, the effective access is determined by the presence of well-trained staff and pre-designed accessibility scenarios and procedures – hence the clear advantage of museums compared to monuments that serve other purposes.

The Institute's activities aimed at standardising conservation proceedings may be particularly important as the latter have a significant impact on the activities of managers of historical sites. Exchange of experience, a bank of good practices and expert advice can play the role of catalysts for change. It is advisable to develop a cooperation platform for inspectors of monuments, guardians of historical sites and designers where they could jointly address the unavoidable issues regarding the adaptation of monuments for people with special needs.

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IMPROVING ACCESSIBILITY: SUPPORT FOR R&D AND HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

National Centre for Research and Development

The National Centre for Research and Development is an executive agency of the Minister of Science and Higher Education. Established in 2007, it carries out tasks related to the state's policy on science, technology, and innovation. The Centre provides support for applied research offering a variety of instruments such as strategic, national, international and European Fund programmes. It acts as the Intermediate Body in the Smart Growth (in Polish: *Inteligentny Rozwój*, PO IR) and Knowledge Education Development (in Polish: *Wiedza Edukacja Rozwój*, PO WER) Operational Programmes. It will have the same function in the programmes within the future financial perspective 2021–2027: European Funds for a Modern Economy (in Polish: *Fundusze Europejskie dla Nowoczesnej Gospodarki*, FENG) and European Funds for Social Development (in Polish: *Fundusze Europejskie dla Rozwoju Społecznego*, FERS). With an annual budget for research and development of one billion euros, we are currently the largest centre, both in Poland and the region, for supporting the development of science and the economy.

The aim of this text is to present the basic information about the Centre's programmes and calls for applications organised with the objective of improving the quality of life and independence of people with special needs, and offering accessibility at higher education institutions (HEIs). Projects recommended for support relate to both technical/technological

and organisational changes at HEIs as well as raising the awareness and competences of the staff to make the educational offer more accessible to people with disabilities. The said projects indirectly translate into overcoming barriers in access to broadly defined cultural objects, including digital content. The discussion below also includes examples of projects directly related to the area of culture.

FAST TRACK FOR PROJECTS IMPLEMENTED AS PART OF THE 'ACCESSIBILITY PLUS' PROGRAMME (COMPETITION 3/1.1.1/2019)

In 2020, the Centre supervised selected projects qualified in the 'Fast Track Accessibility Plus' competition from a year before, with the budget from the European Funds. In sub-measure 1.1.1 of the Smart Growth Operational Programme, better known as Fast Track, in addition to horizontal (thematically unlimited) calls for applications, calls were also organised regarding specific areas or issues. In accordance with the regulations of Competition 3/1.1.1/2019, the project results must aim at implementing the principles of accessibility.

Potentially interested parties could submit applications in three calls for applications: in April, May and June 2019. A total of 22 applications were received, of which 19 were assessed. The support requested in the assessed applications amounted to PLN 55 million, with the total value of the projects estimated at PLN 79 million. The projects were submitted primarily by micro-enterprises and were mostly of a technical nature. Following the assessment, two projects received total funding of PLN 3.8 million, with the total value of the projects amounting to PLN 5.7 million. Thematically, they were classified as medical engineering and IT engineering, and they concerned solutions for people with mobility impairments (bionic prosthetic forearm) and perceptual problems (a shoe-fitting system for children). The projects are expected to be completed in 2021.

'THINGS ARE FOR PEOPLE'

The 'Things Are For People' competition is implemented as part of the Government Programme 'Accessibility Plus 2018–2025'. It aims to 'ensure

free access to goods, services and opportunities to participate in social and public life for people with special needs'. Financed from the European Funds and national public funds, the programme also pays attention to accessibility in culture, primarily in cultural institutions. The call for applications was announced in May 2020 and it addressed a total of 23 topics focused on digital, architectural, ICT, and educational accessibility. Four themes were related to the area of culture:

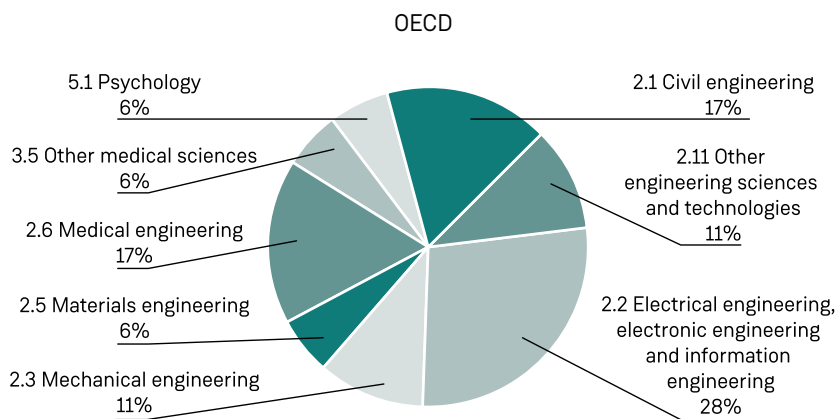
1. Development of technologies ensuring full access to cultural objects/productions in real time;
2. Development of technical solutions for art studios to improve vision for people with visual impairments who are students of art schools of higher education (e.g. in architecture, interior design, design) through systemic solutions based on the installation of additional lighting easily adaptable to specific tasks (including mock-ups, models, prototypes, and other objects) and with the possibility to select the type of light;
3. Development of technological solutions allowing students with disabilities studying at art schools of higher education to zoom in on an image (e.g. a painting of still life, a model, etc.), determine colours (which can blend at low contrasts), distinguish materials, etc.;
4. Development of technological solutions that increase the accessibility of the tourist and cultural offer (including access to historical sites/monuments) for people with special needs.

The value of the project funding had to be between PLN 200 000 and PLN 3 million. The call for applications was open to both research centres and enterprises, as well as consortia composed of both, with the deadline of 25 September 2020. In total, 107 applications were received requesting funding of over PLN 211 million, with the total value of the projects (eligible costs) exceeding PLN 252 million. Given such a high interest in the call, the substantive assessment of the applications was extended. In May 2021, a total of 18 projects were recommended for funding in the amount of PLN 36.2 million (with their total value estimated at PLN 41.3 million).

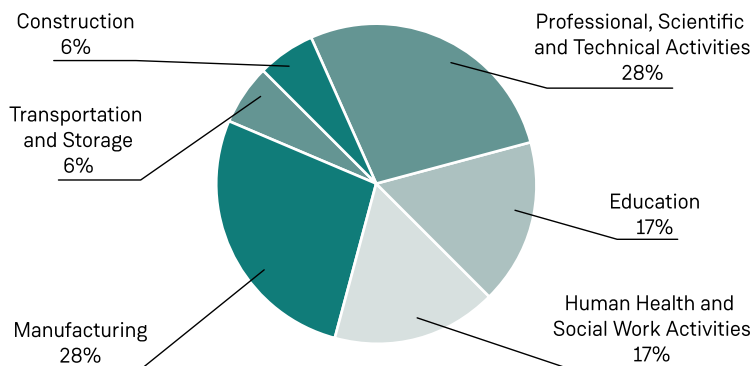
The projects recommended for funding were mostly of a technical nature – 89% of them were classified as relating to the technical and engineering sciences according to the OECD Field of Science and Technology (FOS) Classification, predominantly electrical engineering, electronic engineering and information engineering (28%). The division according to the Polish Classification of Activities (based on the Statistical Classifica-

tion of Economic Activities in the European Community, NACE) revealed no similar concentration in one thematic area.

PROJECTS RECOMMENDED FOR FUNDING IN THE 'THINGS ARE FOR PEOPLE' COMPETITION - BY THE OECD FIELD OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY CLASSIFICATION AND THE POLISH CLASSIFICATION OF ACTIVITIES



POLISH CLASSIFICATION OF ACTIVITIES (BASED ON THE NACE CLASSIFICATION)



Source: Own study based on data from the National Centre for Research and Development

These projects focus mainly on solving problems faced by people with mobility impairments through the development of prostheses, adjusted furniture, dedicated surfaces, wheelchairs, specialised applications, and digital tools for people with special needs. One of the projects seeks to overcome architectural barriers in access to culture through the imple-

mentation of technology based on developing low-budget typhlomap presenting the cultural values of historical parks to increase the accessibility of the tourist and cultural offer for the blind and people with visual impairments.

‘ACCESSIBLE UNIVERSITY’ – THREE EDITIONS OF THE COMPETITION HELD AS PART OF THE ‘ACCESSIBILITY PLUS’ PROGRAMME

In 2021, the Centre launched the third edition of the ‘Accessible University’ competition offering support to HEIs as part of the Operational Programme Knowledge Education Development from the European Funds (Priority Axis 3: Higher Education) to eliminate all kinds of barriers in access to studies and introduce activities ensuring accessibility for students with disabilities into the curricula. The competition was addressed exclusively to HEIs, both public and private, whereby each applicant was eligible for the funding only once to ensure its distribution among as many institutions as possible.

The projects submitted in this competition concentrated on ensuring accessibility in terms of communication, websites and IT tools, the modification of educational programmes and procedures, as well as barrier-free architecture. When carrying out their projects, HEIs are obliged to cooperate closely with non-governmental organisations (NGOs), entities working to eliminate barriers in access to higher education, and people with disabilities involved in activities for improved accessibility.

Universities could apply for funding in three models – the mini, midi or maxi path. The specific activities indicated by the beneficiary in the project and the maximum funding that the HEI could apply for depended on the chosen path.

The mini path gives the HEI a chance to start the basic activities aimed at making it accessible to everyone. Examples of activities in the mini path include hiring a rector’s plenipotentiary for people with disabilities or introducing the function of accessibility coordinator, improving the competences of the staff through dedicated training courses and participation in national thematic conferences related to accessibility. This path is intended for HEIs that have only just started to work on their accessibility.

The midi path is to ensure a significant increase in the HEI's accessibility for people with disabilities compared to the minimum level through increasing the accessibility of internal processes, in particular recruitment, education and research, as well as promoting accessibility solutions in organisational units with diagnosed deficiencies in this area. Examples of activities in this path include the implementation of adjusted forms of sports activities and the training of people responsible for such classes, the employment of educational advisors/consultants, and additional remuneration for foreign language teachers, authors of sports activities, and psychologists offering mental health support.

The final – maxi – path is intended for universities that are leaders in the implementation of the idea of accessibility. On the one hand, it aims to expand or improve the existing services of educational support and, on the other, create centres of excellence in terms of HEI accessibility. What is characteristic of the maxi path is that projects should propose original solutions consistently leading to the increased accessibility of the HEI and its environment. They should be based on the conclusions from the existing activities and may, for example, direct support to new stakeholder groups, provide the basis for developing new specialist services or expand the scope of the existing one, and develop think tanks to work on new issues and tools that allow to make the HEI and its environment more accessible. These projects should propose something new that has not existed before, develop the existing solutions, and increase the impact on the HEI and its environment.

In the two editions completed so far, 151 HEIs received funding, with the value of all projects exceeding PLN 570 million. They included proposals from academic HEIs – also art schools of higher education – and non-academic (professional) HEIs. The highest assessments were given to the Jan Długosz University in Częstochowa, the Paweł Włodkowic University College in Płock, the University of Warsaw, the University of Silesia in Katowice, the University of Gdańsk, the Wrocław University of Applied Informatics, the Higher School of Strategic Planning in Dąbrowa Górnicza, the University of Szczecin, the Pomeranian Medical University in Szczecin, and the State Higher Vocational School in Wałcz.

In response to the third edition, 69 applications were submitted, including eight from art schools of higher education, for a total value of PLN 172 million. They are currently undergoing assessment. The final results should be known before the beginning of the new academic year.

UNIVERSAL DESIGN IN AXIS 3 OF THE OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME KNOWLEDGE EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT

In 2019, using the European Funds, the Centre announced a competition for HEIs for the development and implementation of compulsory courses including universal design as part of the study programme (Competition No. POWR.03.05.00-IP. 08-00-PUN/19 'Universal Design'), in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which defines 'universal design' as the design of products, environments, programmes and services to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialised design.

The products of 35 projects, with a total value of nearly PLN 40 million, are based on special models of the first-cycle and/or second-cycle studies and/or long-cycle studies, developed by a specially appointed team of experts. These models identify the basic learning outcomes, methods of achieving them by students, and methods for the verification of their achievements. Their description takes into account the specificity of scientific fields and disciplines. Support is addressed to students of both technical and pedagogical or artistic faculties (architecture, interior design, construction, urban planning, computer science, programming, industrial design, civil engineering, design, pedagogy). The models also include universal design in the modules for humanities and social science courses.

Continuing with the topic of universal design in 2020, the Centre promoted the development and operation of accessibility knowledge centres at HEIs as units that support the application and dissemination of universal design principles, for example, through dissemination activities to improve staff competences and educate on and train in universal design principles using the knowledge and experience of leading experts, both from Polish and international HEIs, as well as through collaborations with the socio-economic community to develop innovative products and standards for services based on the principles of universal design (Competition No. POWR.03.05.00-IP.0800-CWD/20 'Accessibility Knowledge Centres'). Following the regulations of the competition, four HEIs received funding from the European Funds (with a total value of the projects reaching PLN 15.3 million), each of which is to create a centre in its preferred area of interest:

- Kraków University of Technology – Architecture, Urban Planning, and Construction;
- University of Szczecin – Digitisation and Communication;
- Opole University of Technology – Design and Everyday Objects;
- Military University of Technology – Transport and Mobility.

These activities will be continued, with the Centre's offer expanding in the new financial perspective for 2021–2027 as part of the European Funds for Social Development (FERS) programme.

In addition, the Centre is about to launch an evaluation study of the assumptions and outcomes of projects contracted under this competition as well as the 'Accessible University' competitions. The results of the study will be known early next year. They will allow us to better prepare the competition offer in terms of accessibility under the new financial perspective. Accessibility is a very important topic for us, all the more so because the interest in competitions and the HEI activities in this area continues to increase.

PROJECTS FOCUSED ON ACCESSIBILITY IN THE CENTRE'S OTHER PROGRAMMES

Accessibility projects have also been carried out in the Centre's other programmes. At least several dozen can be identified including those implemented in the Applied Research Programme, the Social Innovation Programme, international programmes, the Fast Track (1.1.1 of the Smart Growth Operational Programme), and the programmes of the previous financial perspective such as the Innovative Economy Operational Programme and the Human Capital Operational Programme. They concerned the digital and architectural dimensions of accessibility such as the automatic adaptation of text and text-graphic documents to accessibility standards, a system of public information for people with visual and hearing impairments, products for improved mobility and accessibility of the environment for seniors and people with disabilities, a therapeutic kit for children and adolescents with disabilities and deficits to overcome barriers in education, and a device for people using manual wheelchairs to traverse stairs and cross architectural barriers on their own.

Several projects can be placed in the broadly defined area of culture. They focused on the transmission of theatre and cultural events for the elderly, a religious tourism support system for the elderly and people with

mobility impairments, as well as a system for the editing of musical information and recording it from scratch for the blind.

Through its activity, the Centre contributes to the elimination of barriers faced by people with disabilities. To this end, we organise programmes, set the competition procedures, and then select and provide funding to projects that promote accessibility. Our wide range of programmes allows beneficiaries to implement projects of various types: from education and raising awareness among students to increasing education opportunities at HEIs, as well as developing products and services for people with special needs. Our approach can be described as comprehensive, with accessibility as only one of many areas supported by the Centre.

ADDITIONAL READING:

- *Modele wsparcia uczelni w celu zwiększenia ich dostępności dla osób z niepełnosprawnościami* [University support models to increase their accessibility for people with disabilities], Warsaw 2019.
- *Moduły zajęć PROJEKTOWANIA UNIWERSALNEGO w ramach wybranych obszarów kształcenia* [Modules of UNIVERSAL DESIGN courses in selected areas of education], Warsaw 2019.
- Government Programme 'Accessibility Plus' 2018–2025, Ministry of Investment and Economic Development [currently: Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy], Warsaw, July 2018.
- *NCBR's Annual Report 2020*, Warsaw 2021.

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SENIORS IN CULTURE. PARTICIPATION IN AND SATISFACTION WITH CULTURAL SERVICES AMONG PEOPLE AGED 65+

Centre for Cultural Statistics, Statistical Office in Kraków

The Statistical Office in Kraków conducts nationwide research as well as methodological and development projects in cultural statistics at the Centre for Cultural Statistics. The Centre acquires, develops and publishes information on entities operating in the field of culture. Statistical studies are carried out with respect to the operation of theatres, opera and operetta houses, philharmonic halls, symphonic and chamber orchestras, choirs, song and dance ensembles, and entertainment enterprises, as well as entities conducting professional cultural activities such as museums, libraries, film institutions, cinemas, galleries, art galleries, centres of culture [in Polish: *centra kultury*], cultural centres [in Polish: *ośrodki kultury*], cultural establishments [in Polish: *domy kultury*], clubs [in Polish: *kluby*], and community centres [in Polish: *świątlice*]. In addition, the Centre also studies artistic and entertainment mass events, the activity of entities on the art and antiques market, and the finances of cultural institutions.

Statistical studies provide information on cultural entities regarding the demand for and supply of their services, in particular the number and structure of entities, projects, participants in cultural events, size and other indices describing cultural phenomena and trends, economic aspects of cultural activities, and employment profiles.

To this end, the Centre conducts in-depth analyses regarding the economic dimensions of culture, which include monitoring the development of the cultural and creative industries as well as trade in cultural and creative services and products. Our team of analysts has developed an innovative methodology of the Culture Satellite Account (CSA) to measure the economic effects of culture and its contribution to the national economy based on economic parameters such as gross domestic product, global production, demand and supply, employment, and expenditure on culture.

The Centre also conducts a regular survey on the participation of the population in culture. Addressed to households, it provides information on the forms of people's cultural activity, the frequency of participation in cultural life, the use of the cultural offer, the development of artistic interests and hobbies related to culture, and the use of contemporary means of communication.

INTRODUCTION

Culture is a universal good of which inclusivity – universality and accessibility for every potential user – should be an immanent feature. Unfortunately, access to cultural objects and certain types of cultural activity can be limited for certain social groups. Limiting factors include architectural barriers, the lack of cultural infrastructure, poor adaptation of the cultural offer to the expectations of specific groups of users, reduced access to cultural information, and economic barriers. The elimination of these constraints can provide an important stimulus for increased cultural activity and contribute to meeting the cultural needs of these vulnerable social groups.

Poland's population is ageing. At the end of 2019, the age dependency ratio for people aged 65 and over¹ was 27.2.² This situation poses a major challenge for public institutions, including cultural institutions, also in

- 1 The age dependency ratio is the number of people aged 65 and over per 100 people at working age (aged 15 to 64).
- 2 *The situation of older people in Poland in 2019*, Statistics Poland, Statistical Office in Białystok, Warsaw–Białystok 2021, p. 18.

terms of adapting their offers and services to the needs and expectations of this age group.

The aim of this article is to analyse the types of cultural activity among people aged 65 and over (seniors). It will allow us to indicate the cultural preferences of this social group and use this knowledge to develop systemic solutions to promote the cultural activation of the 65+ population.

The studied population can be characterised as a social group that, having reduced or ceased its professional activity, is distinguished by a characteristic lifestyle in terms of leisure time activities, reduced mobility, the modified structure of household expenses, and the increased frequency and scope of the use of health services. The group's behavioural specificity also applies to cultural activity.

Given the research aim, a secondary analysis of the results of the 2019 Statistics Poland modular household survey on the participation of the population in culture was conducted.³ The following research questions were posed: 'What forms of cultural activity do people aged 65 and over mainly participate in?' and 'How do people aged 65 and over evaluate the available offer of cultural services?'.

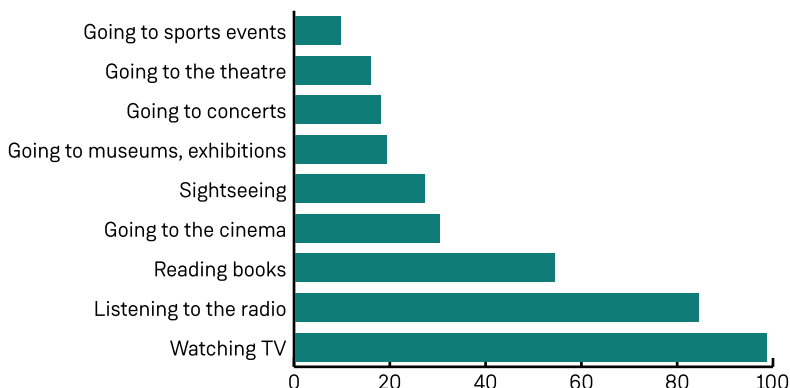
PARTICIPATION IN CULTURE AMONG THE 65+ POPULATION

As the chart below shows, watching TV and listening to the radio was the most popular form of cultural activity among seniors in 2019 (84.3%, with more than half doing it every day). Various television programmes were watched by 98.5% of people aged 65+, both men and women, in urban and rural areas. This is 3.3 percentage points (pp) higher compared to the general population and 11.1 pp higher compared to people aged 19–24. A total of 54.3% of respondents had access to 20 or more television programmes (59.4% in urban areas, 42.6% in rural areas). Interestingly, seniors declared that television could, either completely or partially, replace other forms of cultural activity (listening to the radio – 63.6% of respondents, going to the cinema – 57.8%, reading newspapers and magazines –

3 *Participation in culture in 2019*, Statistics Poland, Statistical Office in Kraków, Warsaw-Kraków 2020.

55.5%, attending sports events – 50.3%). However, television could not serve as a substitute for activities such as reading books (63.8%), going to museums (63.8%), attending theatre performances (56.1%) and concerts (49.4%). The use of television did not translate into seniors' interest in other forms of watching audio-visual productions. In 2019, only 1.7% of respondents used paid film rental services, which was the lowest result compared to younger age groups. In contrast, 30.2% of seniors attended the cinema (21.6% of them – 1–3 times a year).

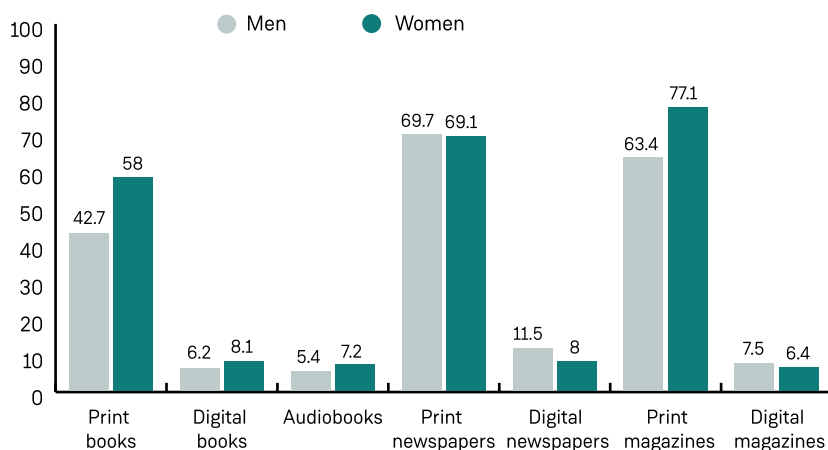
FORMS OF CULTURAL ACTIVITY PREFERRED BY PEOPLE AGED 65 AND OVER IN 2019 (IN %)



Source: Own study based on data by Statistics Poland

Another fundamental form of cultural activity among the 65+ population was reading – 54.1% of people in this age group read books. Compared to other age groups, this was not the best result. Only slightly younger people (50–64 years old) read less (52.7%), while the other groups declared reading books more frequently – by approx. 10 pp on average. The largest group among seniors, 51.9% of respondents, preferred print books, with only 7.3% reaching for e-books and 6.5% for audiobooks. The situation was similar in the case of press readership (newspapers and magazines) – 71.6% declared reading newspapers and 73.1% – magazines (see the chart below).

READING BOOKS, NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES BY PEOPLE AGED 65 AND OVER IN 2019 (IN %)



Source: Own study based on data by Statistics Poland

The vast majority of people aged 65+ (85.9%) did not use the cultural offer of cultural establishments, clubs and centres. No differentiation was found between respondents from urban and rural areas. Attending opera, operetta, ballet and dance performances was not popular; in all age groups, including the 65+ population, over 90% of respondents did not participate in these forms of activity. The data for concerts other than philharmonic concerts and the theatre was found to be different, with attendance negatively correlated with the person's age. In the group of respondents aged 65 and over, 15.7% attended the theatre, 9.9% took part in concerts other than philharmonic ones (philharmonic/classical music concerts – 7.9%). A clear difference in the participation was observed between people from urban and rural areas (the percentage of seniors from rural areas who attended philharmonic concerts, other concerts and the theatre was lower by 6.2 pp, 8.2 pp and 11.9 pp, respectively). Museums and monuments in Poland were visited by 19.1% and 27% of people aged 65 and over, respectively, while zoos, botanical gardens and planetariums – by 12.2%. Not many people travelling abroad visited monuments and museums – 7.6% and 5.5%, respectively.

SATISFACTION WITH THE LOCAL CULTURAL INSTITUTION AND ITS OFFER

Unlike other age groups, seniors declared less dissatisfaction with the network of institutions conducting cultural activities. Only 9.5% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied (compared to just over 13% in other age groups). Of all people aged 65 and over, 57.9% declared a neutral approach, while 32.6% were satisfied or very satisfied (a few percentage points more than younger people – except for people aged 15–24, of whom 34.8% were satisfied). Nearly 42% were satisfied or very satisfied with the network of outlets selling cultural goods – the highest score of all age groups.

In contrast, satisfaction with the local cultural offer (in the place of residence) was lower (30.6%) among seniors than in other age groups (except for people aged 50–64, who evaluated the offer even worse – 25.5%). On average, it was 2.7 pp lower compared to satisfaction levels in other age groups. Women were more satisfied with the network of cultural institutions, the cultural offer and the network of outlets selling cultural goods than men (see table). While the difference in the dissatisfaction level between male and female seniors was of several percentage points, that between seniors living in rural and urban areas was significantly larger (18.8 pp on average). Rural residents were particularly dissatisfied with the local cultural offer (over 27% of respondents). However, as many as 20% were satisfied or very satisfied with the network of institutions conducting cultural activities. Residents of urban areas (over 50%) were satisfied with the network of outlets selling cultural goods.

When asked about the situation in comparison to the previous year, the majority (over 60%) of seniors declared no changes in the access to cultural institutions and their offer, and in the evaluation of the cultural offer. Only seniors living in cities noticed, to a certain degree, an improvement in the opportunities to access cultural institutions and their offer (10.6% of respondents), giving higher evaluation scores to the latter (13.7%).

SATISFACTION WITH ACCESS TO CULTURE FOR PEOPLE AGED 65 AND OVER IN 2019

SPECIFICATION	SATISFACTION WITH THE NETWORK OF INSTITUTIONS CONDUCTING CULTURAL ACTIVITIES			SATISFACTION WITH THE NETWORK OF OUTLETS SELLING CULTURAL GOODS			SATISFACTION WITH THE LOCAL CULTURAL OFFER		
	VERY DISSATISFIED OR DISSATISFIED	NEUTRAL	VERY SATISFIED OR SATISFIED	VERY DISSATISFIED OR DISSATISFIED	NEUTRAL	VERY SATISFIED OR SATISFIED	VERY DISSATISFIED OR DISSATISFIED	NEUTRAL	VERY SATISFIED OR SATISFIED
Total	9.5	57.9	32.6	10.6	47.6	41.8	12.4	55.3	32.3
Men	10.54	61.0	28.5	10.6	48.9	40.4	13.2	57.6	29.3
Women	8.9	55.8	35.3	10.6	46.8	42.7	11.9	53.8	34.4
In urban areas	4.7	57.4	38.0	4.9	43.5	51.6	5.8	54.4	39.7
In rural areas	20.6	59.1	20.3	23.7	57.0	19.2	27.3	57.2	15.4

Source: Own study based on data by Statistics Poland

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

The presented data shows lower participation levels of seniors in broadly defined cultural life compared to other age groups. Passive forms of spending time – mainly watching TV, listening to the radio and reading – tend to prevail.⁴ Nevertheless, the majority of seniors (60.3%) were satisfied or very satisfied with the way they spent their free time (76.7% were satisfied or very satisfied with the amount of free time)⁵,

- 4 Most households of retirees featured a TV set (98.5% compared to 95.9% in the general population), a digital TV reception device (71%), and a radio (69.8% compared to 63.9% in the general population).
- 5 More than 50% of respondents had enough time to do everything with no need to hurry, while one quarter declared that after doing everything they had to do, they could still find time for themselves.

and made either a neutral or positive evaluation of cultural institutions and their offer, as well as the network of outlets selling cultural goods. These results could suggest that people aged 65 and over do not feel the lack of broader contact with culture (although a larger qualitative study would be necessary to confirm this claim). The reasons for this approach can probably be sought by looking at their education levels and lifestyles. The activity of people aged 65 and over can also depend on their health and family situation.⁶ It is worth adding that while participation in institutionalised culture in the 65+ population is rather low, nearly half of respondents (49.3%) declared participation in parties, social functions and club events (with 18.7% of them more than four times a year).

One of the reasons for reduced cultural activity could also be financial, even though statistical data shows that the average spending on culture per person per year in the households of retirees was PLN 395.04, i.e. PLN 30.36 more than in the average household.⁷ Most respondents (75%) declared no changes in their financial ability to meet their cultural needs compared to the previous year. The majority of retirees' households never stopped buying a daily newspaper or a magazine (65.4%) or a book for adults (54.6%) for financial reasons. More than 40% of seniors never gave up going to the cinema, theatre, opera, concerts or exhibitions for financial reasons. The percentage of withdrawal due to financial issues was the highest for the theatre, opera and concerts (9.3% of households resigned often or very often). Differences can be observed between urban and rural residents – not only in the frequency of withdrawal (approx. 13 pp more seniors living in rural areas resigned from going to the theatre, opera, concerts, museums and the cinema, while over 14% – from buying a book for adults), but also in the

6 J. Czapiński, P. Błędowski, *Aktywność społeczna osób starszych w kontekście percepcji Polaków. Diagnoza społeczna 2013. Raport tematyczny* [The social activity of the elderly in Poles' perception. A social diagnosis 2013. Thematic report], Warsaw 2014.

7 A large part (39.8%) of these funds were spent on radio and television subscriptions, cable television, and the purchase of newspapers and magazines (14.9%). There was a significant difference between the expenses of seniors in urban areas (PLN 451.20) and in rural areas (PLN 277.56).

number of non-responses and/or 'doesn't apply' responses (on average, 15 pp more in the case of residents of rural areas).⁸

Although people living in retirees' households declared the need to resign from the purchase of at least one book for adults more frequently than the general population (9.7% vs. 8.6% of all households), only 15.3% of seniors used library services. Given that every commune (municipality) has a statutory obligation to operate a library, this low rate cannot be explained by the lack of access to such institutions – perhaps their book collections do not correspond to the interests of this group of readers.

It is worth noting that seniors tend to prefer traditional forms of contact with culture. Interest in books, newspapers and magazines in formats other than in print is low, which may reflect the respondents' habits in regard to the forms of contact with literature and the press as well as, perhaps, their limited access to e-book readers (only 4.7% of retirees' households featured such a device). Access to a computer (44.3% of retirees' households) and the Internet (53.6% compared to 80.2% of all households) was also relatively low.

In summary, the broadly discussed social need to activate an increasingly larger group of seniors aged 65 and over should also focus on their increased participation in culture. Actions should be taken both to stimulate the need for contact with culture and encourage people to opt for active rather than passive forms of participation.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS:

- Czapiński J., Błędowski P., *Aktywność społeczna osób starszych w kontekście percepcji Polaków. Diagnoza społeczna 2013. Raport tematyczny* [The social activity of the elderly in Poles' perception. A social diagnosis 2013. Thematic report], Warsaw 2014.

- 8 In questions about giving up the purchase or rental of a film, album or computer game, non-responses (lack of answer) and 'doesn't apply' responses amounted to an average of 69% of all answers; in questions about giving up attending the museum, cinema, theatre and opera, non-answers and 'doesn't apply' responses accounted for over 34% of all answers.

- *The situation of older people in Poland in 2019*, Statistics Poland, Statistical Office in Białystok, Warsaw–Białystok 2021.
- *Participation in culture in 2019*, Statistics Poland, Statistical Office in Kraków, Warsaw–Kraków 2020.

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ADAPTATION OF ENTITIES OPERATING IN CULTURE TO THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES BASED ON THE 2020 STATISTICS POLAND REPORTS

Culture and National Heritage Statistics Division,
Social Surveys Department, Statistics Poland

Statistics Poland (in Polish: *Główny Urząd Statystyczny* or GUS) is an office of government administration that serves and operates under the direct supervision of the President of Statistics Poland. The President of Statistics Poland is a central organ of public administration in the field of statistics and is assisted in the performance of duties by official statistics services.

Statistics Poland collects and makes available statistical information on most areas of public life and selected aspects of private life as regulated by applicable legal regulations – the Act on official statistics¹ and the annually published Programme of Statistical Surveys of Official Statistics.²

- 1 Act of 29 June 1995 on official statistics, Online Database of Polish Legislation (in Polish: *Internetowy System Aktów Prawnych*, ISAP), <http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/download.xsp/WDU19950880439/U/D19950439Lj.pdf> [accessed: 6 August 2021].
- 2 Programme of Statistical Surveys of Official Statistics, Bulletin of Public Information, Statistics Poland, <https://bip.stat.gov.pl/dzialalnosc-statystyki-publicznej/program-badan-statystycznych/> [accessed: 6 August 2021].

The Culture and National Heritage Statistics Division is responsible for conducting statistical surveys related to culture and national heritage, as well as the links between culture and tourism.

ENTITIES OPERATING IN THE FIELD OF CULTURE

Persons with disabilities face various limitations of their participation in public life, which includes access to cultural goods. As a result, the functionality and accessibility of public service buildings is essential to improve the quality of everyday life for people with disabilities. Facilitated access to services can create real opportunities for them to participate in social life.

Statistics Poland conducts activities to provide, among others, information on entities operating in the field of culture that eliminate functional barriers to enable people with disabilities to participate in public life.

In 2020, there were 15 509³ entities operating in the field of culture. The most represented group were libraries and library service points (59.2% of the total number of entities), followed by centres of culture, cultural centres and establishments, clubs, and community centres (26%), museums and institutions related to museums (8.2%), indoor cinemas (3.2%), galleries and art galleries (2%), as well as theatres and music institutions (1.3%).

- 3 For the purposes of this analysis, 15 types of entities operating in the field of culture were distinguished: theatres (dramatic and puppet), music theatres (operas and operettas), philharmonic halls, orchestras, choirs, song and dance ensembles, museums and institutions related to museums, libraries and library service points, galleries and art galleries, centres of culture [in Polish: *centra kultury*], cultural centres [in Polish: *ośrodki kultury*], cultural establishments [in Polish: *domy kultury*], clubs [in Polish: *kluby*], community centres [in Polish: *świątlice*], and indoor cinemas.

ENTITIES OPERATING IN THE FIELD OF CULTURE BY VOIVODESHIP IN 2020

SPECIFICATION	ENTITIES OPERATING IN THE FIELD OF CULTURE	PER POPULATION OF 10 000	PER 100 KM ²
Poland	15 509	4	5
Dolnośląskie	1 200	4	6
Kujawsko-pomorskie	763	4	4
Lubelskie	1 001	5	4
Lubuskie	371	4	3
Łódzkie	896	4	5
Małopolskie	1 623	5	11
Mazowieckie	1 874	3	5
Opolskie	584	6	6
Podkarpackie	1 192	6	7
Podlaskie	519	4	3
Pomorskie	838	4	5
Śląskie	1 504	3	12
Świętokrzyskie	489	4	4
Warmińsko-mazurskie	590	4	2
Wielkopolskie	1 277	4	4
Zachodniopomorskie	788	5	3

Source: Statistics Poland, own data

LIBRARIES

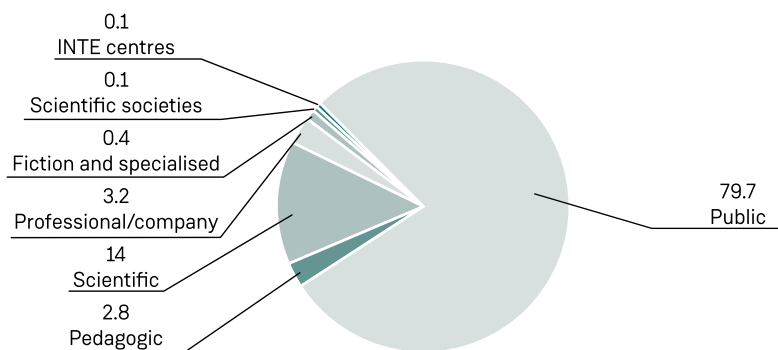
Libraries are trying to adapt their facilities for people with disabilities to improve access to library collections and thus provide equal educational opportunities for this social group.

In 2020, out of 9 180 library service points, 4 266 (46.5%) were located in facilities adapted to the needs of people with disabilities. The percentage of adjusted facilities in the total number of entities of a given type was the highest for scientific libraries (74.1%), and the lowest for centres of scientific, technical and economic information (INTE)⁴ (18.8%).

Scientific libraries also ranked the highest in terms of the accessibility of places for readers with disabilities – 2.7% of places.

4 Centres of scientific, technical and economic information (in Polish: *ośrodki informacji naukowej, technicznej i ekonomicznej*, INTE).

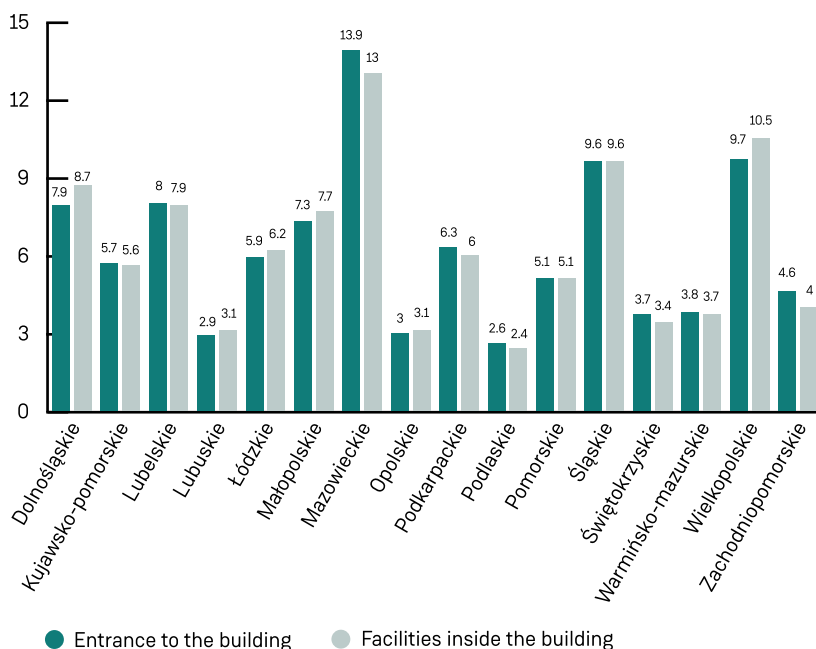
LIBRARY UNITS ADAPTED TO THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES (IN %)



Note: The data does not add up to 100% because 14 public libraries and one pedagogical library were simultaneously classified as scientific libraries.

Source: Statistics Poland, own data

PUBLIC LIBRARIES ADAPTED TO THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN 2020 – BY VOIVODESHIP (IN %)



Source: Statistics Poland, own data

LIBRARY UNITS IN BUILDINGS ADAPTED TO THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND PLACES FOR READERS WITH
DISABILITIES IN 2020

SPECIFICATION		TOTAL	PUBLIC	PEDAGOGIC	SCIENTIFIC	PROFESSIONAL/ COMPANY	FICTION AND SPECIALISED	SCIENTIFIC SOCIETIES	INTE CENTRES
Number of library units		9 180	7 782	254	808	274	50	11	16
Places for readers		172 973	121 666	5 430	46 596	1 895	302	149	167
Adapted for people with disabilities in the total number of libraries of a given type	in absolute numbers	4 266	3 398	121	599	138	18	4	3
	in %	46.5	43.7	47.6	74.1	50.4	36.0	36.4	18.8
Places for people with disabilities		1 882	606	37	1 238	40	3	-	4
LIBRARY UNITS IN BUILDINGS ADAPTED TO THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES - BY ACCOMMODATION TYPE (IN %)									
Entrance to the building		98.5	98.5	99.2	98.7	98.6	94.4	100.0	66.7
Facilities inside the building		65.6	60.6	72.7	90.2	77.5	61.1	75.0	100.0
Places for people with disabilities in the number of places available to readers in libraries of a given type		1.1	0.5	0.7	2.7	2.1	1.0	-	2.4

Note: The data does not add up to 100% because 14 public libraries and one pedagogical library were simultaneously classified as scientific libraries.

Source: Statistics Poland, own data

THEATRES AND MUSIC INSTITUTIONS

Out of 217 facilities listed as theatres and music institutions, 80.2% had the entrance to the building adapted for people with disabilities and 77% featured facilities inside the building. Philharmonic halls proved to be the most prepared, with 100% of their buildings featuring the adequate entrance and facilities inside the building.

THEATRES AND MUSIC INSTITUTIONS (INCLUDING THOSE ADAPTED FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES) IN 2020

OPERAS	THEATRES, MUSICAL AND ENTERTAINMENT INSTITUTIONS	BUILDING ADAPTED TO THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES		PERCENTAGE OF FACILITIES ADAPTED TO THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES OF THE TOTAL NUMBER OF INSTITUTIONS OF A GIVEN TYPE	
		ENTRANCE TO THE BUILDING	FACILITIES INSIDE THE BUILDING	ENTRANCE TO THE BUILDING	FACILITIES INSIDE THE BUILDING
Theatres and music institutions	217	174	167	80.2	77.0
Theatres	167	134	127	80.2	76.0
Dramatic and puppet	133	106	100	79.7	75.2
Dramatic	98	81	78	82.7	79.6
Puppet	35	25	22	71.4	62.9
Musical	34	28	27	82.4	79.4
Operas	12	11	11	91.7	91.7
Operettas	22	17	16	77.3	72.7
Philharmonic halls, orchestras and choirs	47	38	38	80.9	80.9
Philharmonic halls	24	24	24	100.0	100.0
Orchestras and choirs	23	14	14	60.9	60.9
Song and dance ensembles	3	2	2	66.7	66.7

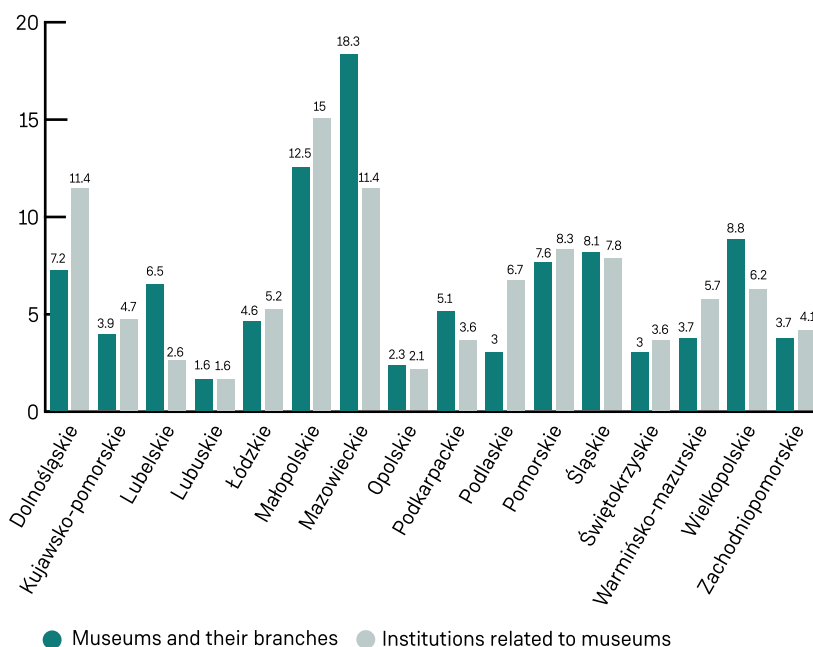
Source: Statistics Poland, own data

MUSEUMS AND INSTITUTIONS RELATED TO MUSEUMS

As of 31 December 2020, there were 932 museums (including branches) in Poland, of which 432 declared adaptation to the needs of people with disabilities. In 403 buildings, this statement applied to the entrance to the building, while in 366 to facilities inside the building. Exhibitions adapted to the needs of people with disabilities were declared by 240 facilities.

Of 345 institutions related to museums, 193 declared adaptation to the needs of people with disabilities – with respect to the entrance to the building (188 cases) and facilities inside the building (164 cases). Exhibitions adapted to the needs of people with disabilities were reported in 105 facilities.

MUSEUMS AND THEIR BRANCHES AND INSTITUTIONS RELATED TO MUSEUMS ADAPTED TO THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES – BY VOIVODESHIP (IN %)



Source: Statistics Poland, own data

MUSEUMS AND THEIR BRANCHES (INCLUDING THOSE ADAPTED TO THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES) IN 2020

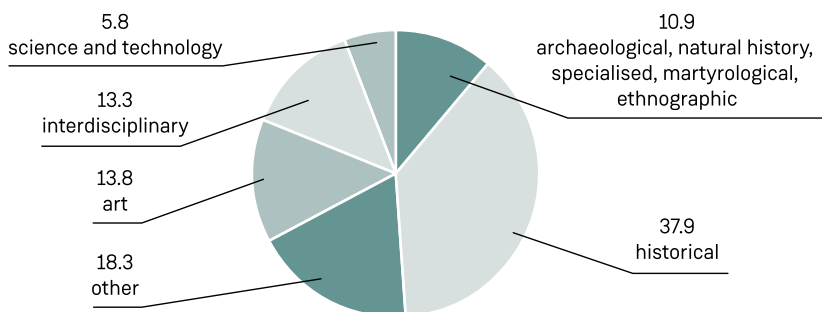
SPECIFICATION	MUSEUMS AND THEIR BRANCHES IN TOTAL	OF WHICH SPECIFICALLY:			EXHIBITIONS ADAPTED TO THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES
		FACILITIES ADAPTED TO THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES			
			ENTRANCE TO THE BUILDING	FACILITIES INSIDE THE BUILDING	
		TOTAL			
POLAND	932	432	403	366	240
PUBLIC SECTOR, including:	653	371	348	319	200
• government administration units	88	57	53	54	43
• Ministry of Culture, National Heritage and Sport	76	49	45	47	39
• local government units	559	310	291	261	155
– at the level of gmina	174	84	80	64	38
– at the level of powiat	179	105	97	91	47
– at the level of voivodeship	206	121	114	106	70
PRIVATE SECTOR, including:	279	61	55	47	40
• associations	49	8	8	7	6
• foundations	38	8	7	4	4
• companies	10	3	2	3	3
• churches or religious associations	14	10	9	7	3
• natural persons	160	28	25	23	21

(CONT.) MUSEUMS AND THEIR BRANCHES (INCLUDING THOSE ADAPTED TO THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES) IN 2020

SPECIFICATION	MUSEUMS AND THEIR BRANCHES IN TOTAL	OF WHICH SPECIFICALLY:			EXHIBITIONS ADAPTED TO THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES
		FACILITIES ADAPTED TO THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES			
		TOTAL	ENTRANCE TO THE BUILDING	FACILITIES INSIDE THE BUILDING	
• art	79	48	48	43	33
• archaeological	27	12	11	11	6
• ethnographic and anthropological	58	22	20	19	9
• historical	382	153	140	128	91
• martyrological	21	16	16	14	8
• natural history	12	6	6	5	2
• science and technology	82	25	23	21	14
• specialised	11	5	4	3	1
• interdisciplinary	105	63	59	54	32
• other	155	82	76	68	44

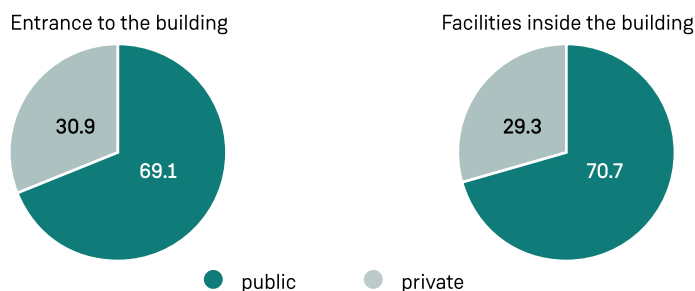
Source: Statistics Poland, own data

EXHIBITIONS IN MUSEUMS AND THEIR BRANCHES ADAPTED TO THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES (IN %)



Source: Statistics Poland, own data

FACILITIES ADAPTED TO THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN INSTITUTIONS RELATED TO MUSEUMS – BY OWNERSHIP SECTOR (IN %)



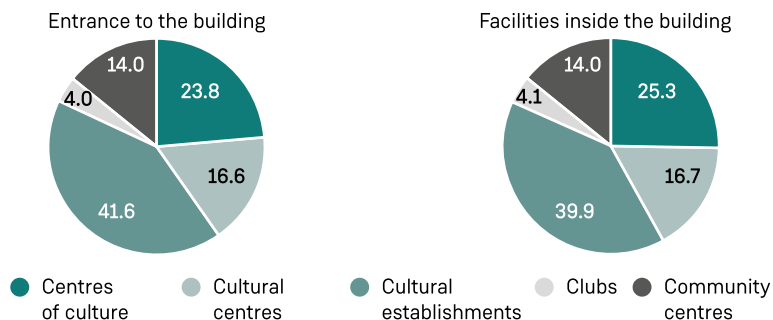
Source: Statistics Poland, own data

CENTRES OF CULTURE, CULTURAL CENTRES AND ESTABLISHMENTS, CLUBS, AND COMMUNITY CENTRES

The accessibility of this group of entities for persons with disabilities is particularly important due to the multifaceted spectrum of their socio-cultural activities. Located in virtually every gmina, these facilities are a reflection of the local community. Out of 5 866 buildings and premises used by centres of culture, cultural centres and establishments, clubs, and community centres in 2020, 3 074 (52.4%) were adapted for people with

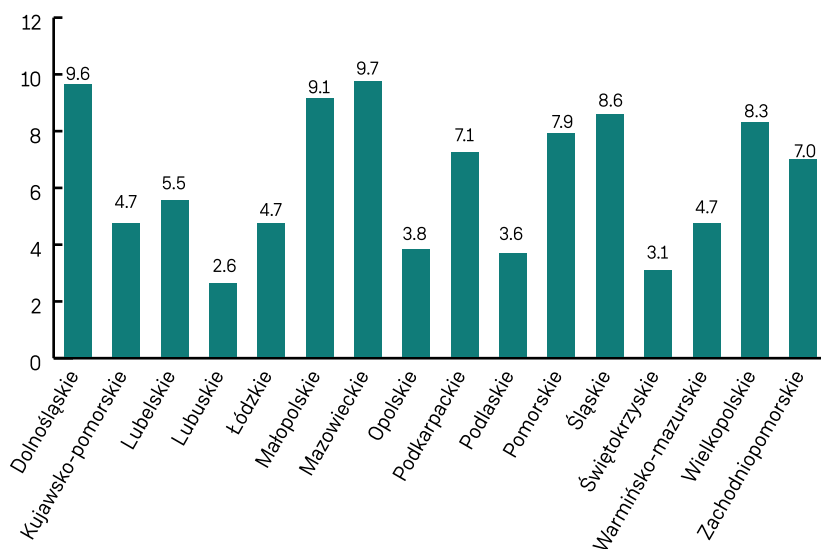
disabilities: 3 026 featured an adapted entrance to the building and 2 186 had facilities inside the building.

BUILDINGS ADAPTED TO THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN CENTRES OF CULTURE, CULTURAL CENTRES AND ESTABLISHMENTS, CLUBS, AND COMMUNITY CENTRES (IN %)



Source: Statistics Poland, own data

BUILDINGS AND PREMISES USED BY CENTRES OF CULTURE, CULTURAL CENTRES AND ESTABLISHMENTS, CLUBS, AND COMMUNITY CENTRES ADAPTED TO THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES - BY VOIVODESHIP (IN %)

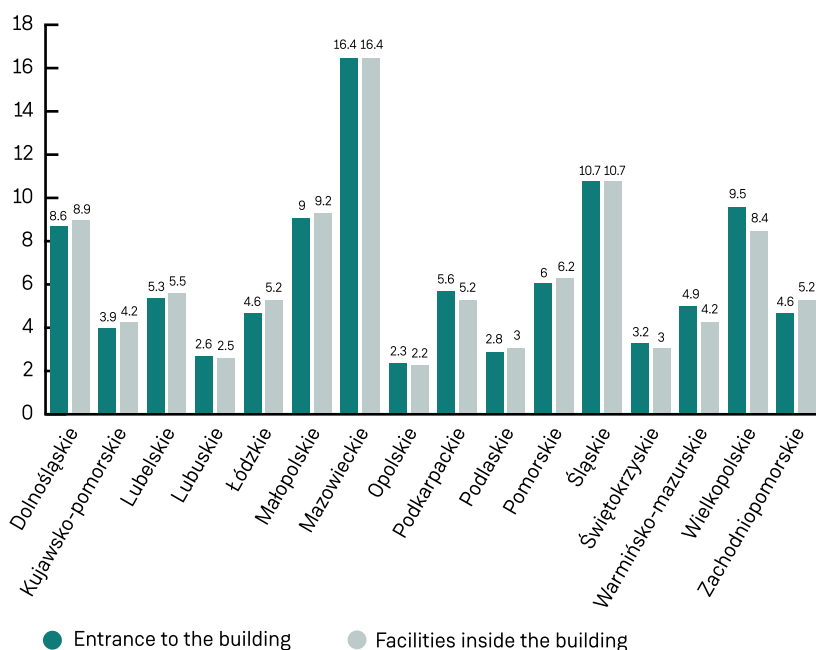


Source: Statistics Poland, own data

CINEMAS

Seeking to attract as many viewers as possible, cinemas are not only expanding their offer to include additional activities but are also modernising their infrastructure. As of the end of 2020, there were 511 indoor cinemas in Poland. Like other institutions, they are trying to adapt their facilities to ensure access to their offer for people with disabilities. Accessible cinemas accounted for 85.3% of all indoor cinemas (436). An adapted entrance to the building was reported by 432 cinemas, and facilities inside the building – by 403 cinemas.

INDOOR CINEMAS ADAPTED TO THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES – BY VOIVODESHIP (IN %)



Source: Statistics Poland, own data

Pursuant to the provisions of the Act (adopted by the Polish Sejm on 19 July 2019) on ensuring accessibility for people with special needs (Journal of Laws, item 1696, as amended), public sector bodies will be obliged to ensure accessibility by implementing universal design, new solutions, and improvements in removing the existing barriers. Subsequent

editions of official statistics surveys will allow us to monitor changes in this respect.

Information on culture statistics can be found on the website of Statistics Poland in the area of Culture (<https://stat.gov.pl/en/topics/culture-tourism-sport/culture/>), the annual report *Culture in ...* [a given year] (<https://stat.gov.pl/en/topics/culture-tourism-sport/culture/culture-in-2019,1,12.html>), and the Local Data Bank (<https://bdl.stat.gov.pl/BDL/dane/podgrup/temat>).

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4.

ACCESSIBILITY AND THE MEDIA



ON THE (IN)ACCESSIBILITY OF DIGITAL CULTURAL CONTENT

National Media Institute

Established in early 2021, the National Media Institute seeks to integrate knowledge about the behaviour of television viewers, Internet users and radio listeners, develop innovative technologies for digital media measurement and promote good practices in audience research.

The pandemic has redefined the principles of dialogue between the creators and users of content, presenting cultural institutions with completely new challenges. An accelerated digital transformation has become a necessity; without it, access to culture in the past months would have been drastically limited. It can be argued that never before have electronic media played such a vital role in providing cultural content to such a wide audience.

This reflection has prompted the following questions: Do we know who receives the content shared with the world via the Internet, radio, and television? How is it accessed and who is excluded?

It is no surprise that in recent times, health has become by far the most important issue to us, pushing other values to lower positions. In the *COVID 365+*¹ survey by Ipsos, as many as 72% of respondents indicated

1 *Covid 365+. Wyniki badania po roku pandemii* [Covid 365+. Results of the survey after one year of the pandemic], Ipsos, <https://www.ipsos.com/pl-pl/covid-365-wyniki-badania-po-roku-pandemii> [accessed: 30 July 2021].

‘my health’ as a particularly important value, while contact with culture (art, theatre, concerts) ranked among the three least frequent responses (only 11% of respondents). In the *Target Group Index* survey, conducted by Kantar in autumn 2020 (October–December)², as many as 88% of respondents were less likely to go to concerts, museums, the theatre and the cinema. This marks a dramatic decrease, which, however, comes as no surprise considering the timing of the survey. While the use of traditional forms of contact with culture was drastically reduced, time budgets³ saw a shift towards the consumption of electronic media. During that time, many museums, galleries, theatres, opera houses and local community centres invested time and effort in the digitisation of their resources and activities, making them available online.

According to the already mentioned *Covid 365+* survey by Ipsos, nearly half (45%) of Poles declared having more time at their disposal than before. While the report does not specify how much additional free time people gained, the very fact that there was more of it inspired questions on how it was used. During the lockdowns and pandemic restrictions, we spent more time at home, trying to figure out how to meet our needs for access to information, culture and entertainment. The latter proved to be of particular importance in the face of decreasing social and consumer sentiment between February 2020 and February 2021. The Kantar Con-

2 *Target Group Index*, Kantar, <https://tgismart.com/> [accessed: 30 July 2021].

3 A time budget may be defined as a list of behaviours (tasks, activities) over the period of one day (24 hours) or a longer calendar unit. It is also a method used to study, describe and analyse the behaviour of groups of different sizes. Based on the average duration of everyday activities, the time budget structure is established, making it possible to analyse the relationships between the main areas of human activity such as work and studying, and leisure, entertainment and culture as free time activities. Time budget studies have high diagnostic and prognostic value for social policy and empirical sociology (lifestyles, participation in culture). A model study covers 365 days of the year to account for all factors and behavioural variations. The most effective technique of data collection is self-observation: respondents record their activities on a special sheet (a chronocard, a diary), in which they are supported by the interviewer (Yesterday Interview) to review and balance out the activities from the past 24 hours. Based on: <https://encyklopedia.pwn.pl/haslo/budzet-czasu;3881677.html> [accessed: 8 September 2021].

sumer Index in that period fell from 1.7 to -27.6, hitting the lowest value in history, -34.1, in November 2020. For many of us, electronic media became not only a window to the world but also a tool enabling remote work and contact with the world. Therefore, it is worth exploring how they were used.

According to the *Mediapanel* survey by Gemius⁴, between January 2020 and January 2021, Internet traffic (i.e. the number of page views) increased by 15%, with 10% on mobile devices and 23% on stationary devices. The latter figure seems particularly interesting, as such an increase had never been observed before. It clearly shows that we used the Internet at home. With this data in mind, one might ask what the consumption of cultural content looked like. Interestingly, while the number of visits to websites dedicated to culture decreased by 4%, the number of visitors to these websites increased by 3%. This is a considerable figure, as it translates to 800 000 people looking, most likely, for a substitute for traditional forms of contact with culture and art online. The time of the pandemic was also a period of a very dynamic growth in the number of users of the audio and video Over-the-Top (OTT) media services, with Netflix emerging as the absolute leader. In January 2020, this streaming service had 5.14 million users in Poland and as many as 6.94 million only a year later. Interesting changes were also observed in the behaviour of television viewers (terrestrial and satellite). According to the report from the *COVID TRACK* survey by Mullenlowe Mediahub, 'with the start of the events in 2020, the Average Viewing Time (AVT) rates in Poland soared for informational (+98%), political (+59%), science and education (+50%) and artistic and cultural (+29%) programmes'.⁵ Were television viewers also seeking a substitute for culture and art otherwise unavailable in the traditional form? While there is no hard data to support this hypothesis, it may be considered highly probable.

During the pandemic, many cultural institutions began to post their content and broadcast online. To many of them, in the face of the lock-

4 *Mediapanel*, Gemius, <https://media-panel.pl/> [accessed: 30 July 2021].

5 Report *Covid Track* by Mullenlowe Mediahub, *Zachowania konsumenckie po roku pandemii* [Consumer behaviour after one year of the pandemic], http://www.mullenlowemediahub.pl/reports/RAPORT-COVID-TRACK-by-Mullenlowe_Mediahub-2021.pdf [accessed: 2 August 2021].

downs, the accelerated digital transformation proved indispensable for the continuation of their missions, as discussed in greater detail in the report *Kultura w pandemii* [Culture in the pandemic] by Centrum Cyfrowe.⁶ The report offers a number of conclusions regarding remote culture such as: '(Cultural) institutions also need support to define the profile of their online users and the development of their online audiences in order to effectively create an attractive offer without leaving out certain groups of users'. The authors of the report argue that, while highly commendable, many online cultural activities were implemented without a sufficient research background and analytical support. This was due to budget constraints, a fast pace of work and a sudden, externally enforced change in the mode of operation. For many institutions, adaptation to the pandemic conditions was a purely tactical decision which, however, lacked strategic reflection. While this observation is by no means intended as a critique, given the new dimension of openness, also discussed in this report, many activities related to cultural content communication may be assumed to have entered the virtual space for good. If this is indeed the case, the processes of developing a cultural offer should be founded on a thorough determination of the needs of both online and offline audiences. Not only will this allow us to address them better, but it will also prevent exclusion.

On the one hand, access to culture has been significantly democratised with electronic media; on the other, it is strongly correlated to the accessibility of technology (the Internet, radio and television). Offering some insight into content distribution and consumption patterns, modern audience measurement has become critical to understanding content reception. Authors of cultural policies, managers of cultural institutions and, finally, the creators themselves should have access to reliable information about who and how 'decodes' their message online. However, the already highly complex world of electronic media is becoming increasingly more intricate, with new technologies and innovations emerging every year. This matrix of countless devices, media services, broadcasting technologies and websites poses a significant cognitive challenge. In addition, ongoing media convergence also results in new patterns of media consumption.

6 *Kultura w pandemii* [Culture in the pandemic], Centrum Cyfrowe, <https://centrumcyfrowe.pl/raport-kultura-w-pandemii/> [accessed: 2 August 2021].

Until recently, Poland has not seen a single-source research service on electronic media offering consistent information on audience behaviour. As a result, the image of our Internet, radio and television consumption was fragmented. Its measurement was largely hindered by divergent interests of various market players, which is typical not only of the Polish market. In many countries it took years to develop research standards, and many markets do not have any standards at all. Across the globe, the role of a trusted third party that guarantees the impartiality and reliability of single-source data is often entrusted to a public entity operating outside the system and the pressure of market forces.

The end of last year was the time when the Chairman of the National Broadcasting Council, the founder of the National Media Institute, became actively involved in the development of uniform media research standards in Poland. The task of the newly established Institute is to integrate knowledge about the behaviour of television viewers, Internet users and radio listeners, develop innovative technologies for digital media measurement and promote good practices in audience research.

In July 2021, the Institute proceeded to launch the Establishment Survey that will study nearly 70 000 people in 30 000 households across the country. This is the largest study of this type in Poland and it will not only show the habits related to the use of the Internet, radio and television but will also diagnose the technological and competence barriers that may be a source of digital exclusion.

The survey will provide insight into the scale and scope of this type of marginalisation, hopefully answering the questions about who is excluded and from what content.

The procedure includes a so-called pantry check – a detailed inventory of all media access devices available in a household. It will allow us to identify technology leaders and their role and relations with household members. The knowledge from this research project is expected to be crucial for the future development of programmes in terms of digitisation and access to digital culture. The survey is planned as a continuous and regular research project, and its findings are expected to feed our specific media-focused repository of structured and standardised statistical data.

While the future remains uncertain, one can easily assume that whichever scenario becomes our reality, cultural content will forever be widely present in electronic media. Although numerous studies (NCK/PBS, Ipsos,

Mullenlowe Mediahub) show that audiences cannot wait and are ready to physically return to museums, theatres and cinemas, many of the media consumption habits that emerged during the pandemic can be expected to stay with us for longer. This is an opportunity for culture to reach wider audiences and include previously excluded groups. As the report *Culture in the pandemic*⁷ concludes, 'further in-depth research is currently needed, particularly support for research initiatives conducted by consortia of institutions and as interinstitutional collaboration projects, which can provide the cultural sector with data useful for strategic planning'.

The Institute's tasks and research seem to correspond perfectly to this need. Hopefully, researchers with many years of experience, associated with the Institute, will provide culture managers with knowledge about their user needs and profiles which can be easily used in practice. It is our belief that among the beneficiaries of our research and analyses there will be: (1) culture creators and content producers, who will gain insight into new technology and media applications; (2) managers of cultural institutions, who face the challenge of developing new digital services; and (3) cultural policy makers, who will gain access to integrated knowledge about the consumption of culture in electronic media. Last but not least, our Establishment Survey, as the first one in Poland conducted on such a large scale, will provide us with precise information on which social groups cannot access the cultural content distributed through digital channels and why.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS:

- *Covid 365+. Wyniki badania po roku pandemii* [Covid 365+. Results of the survey after one year of the pandemic], Ipsos, <https://www.ipsos.com/pl-pl/covid-365-wyniki-badania-po-roku-pandemii> [accessed: 30 July 2021].
- *ENCYKLOPEDIA PWN* [The PWN Encyclopaedia], <https://encyklopedia.pwn.pl/haslo/budzet-czasu;3881677.html> [accessed: 8 September 2021].
- *Kultura w pandemii* [Culture in the pandemic], Centrum Cyfrowe, <https://centrumcyfrowe.pl/raport-kultura-w-pandemii/> [accessed: 2 August 2021].

- *Mediapanel*, Gemius, <https://media-panel.pl/> [accessed: 30 July 2021].
- *Report Covid Track* by Mullenlowe Mediahub, *Zachowania konsumentów po roku pandemii* [Consumer behaviour after one year of the pandemic], http://www.mullenlowemediahub.pl/reports/RAPORT-COVID-TRACK-by-Mullenlowe_Mediahub-2021.pdf [accessed: 2 August 2021].
- *Target Group Index*, Kantar, <https://tgismart.com/> [accessed: 30 July 2021].

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ACCESSIBILITY AT THE NATIONAL FILM ARCHIVE – AUDIOVISUAL INSTITUTE

National Film Archive – Audiovisual Institute

The National Film Archive – Audiovisual Institute is a modern cultural institution that was established on 1 June 2017, following the merger of the National Film Archive and the National Audiovisual Institute. Its statutory mission is to digitise, collect, restore, share and promote Polish audio-visual heritage, and disseminate the most valuable examples of film culture. The Institute is also a co-producer of new audio-visual materials (films, radio and television broadcasts, as well as film and music publications). It is also in charge of numerous online projects offering access to digitised film and other audio-visual productions. In terms of providing content tailored to people with special needs, two media services stand out: Ninateka and Fototeka.

Ninateka is a Video on Demand (VOD) service that offers open and free-of-charge access to the vast collections of Polish audio-visual culture. It features Polish film and theatre productions in formats adapted to the needs of the blind and people with visual impairments, as well as the deaf and people with hearing impairments. The [Ninateka.pl](https://ninateka.pl) service allows these groups to learn about Polish film productions (feature films, documentaries, animated films and cartoons) and theatre performances. It was developed in compliance with the Level AA requirements of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0). This means that the website is accessible to people with disabilities, compatible with text-to-

voice software, adapted to display content in high-contrast mode, and equipped with a special enhanced contrast version for people with visual impairments.

The accommodations provided by Ninateka put it at the forefront of media services in Poland that excel at making Polish audio-visual heritage accessible to all users. Our efforts were acknowledged by the jury of the competition for the Best Accessibility Project held in 2014 by the Polish Academy of Accessibility, in which Ninateka won the first prize. One year before, in December 2013, the service underwent an accessibility audit conducted by the Visible Foundation, which resulted in the implementation of dedicated IT solutions to ensure the maximum accessibility of the website. We are constantly working on the accessibility of posted multimedia productions – for example, 207 of them feature transcriptions for the deaf and hard of hearing. We strive to make our portal accessible to people unable to hear the soundtrack, seniors, people using mobile devices, and foreigners learning Polish. Currently, Ninateka offers access to 25 theatre performances, 29 feature films and short films, 24 documentaries, 17 animated films, and six cartoons – altogether 101 productions – with audio description. This solution makes the said productions fully accessible to the blind and people with visual impairments, while providing for an interesting experience of other users of Ninateka, who can experiment and focus on the reception of a film purely in its audio form. We are constantly working on adapting more materials. For deaf people who do not know the Polish spoken language, Ninateka provides 91 items, including theatre performances, current affairs/journalistic programmes, documentaries, feature and animated films, with professional Polish Sign Language (PJM) interpretation. The latter were prepared for selected materials in consultation with teachers of deaf children and youth, in response to great demand reported by these users. In 2020, another 22 transcriptions were prepared for audio-visual productions recorded at the Institute's headquarters at 3/5 Wałbrzyska Street (meetings with artists), which are being systematically added to the collection. They include materials from the following series: *Spotkanie z 'Dekalogiem'* [Meeting with the 'Decalogue'] (10 transcriptions), *Kino od Nowa* [Cinema Anew] (3 transcriptions), *Kino w dobrym gatunku* [Class A Cinema] (3 transcriptions), a meeting celebrating the 50th anniversary of the premiere of the film *2001: A Space Odyssey*, a meeting held as part of the 2020 Singer's Warsaw Festival, *W przededniu wojny* [On the Eve of War], a lecture by Marcin Zaborski and

a screening of pre-war documentaries, and the *Sztuka widzenia* [The Art of Seeing] series (3 transcriptions). In terms of accessibility, Ninateka co-operated with organisations such as the Visible Foundation, [Dostępni.eu](https://dostepni.eu), and the Audio Description Foundation. Transcriptions, audio descriptions and PJM interpretation are prepared by highly qualified people who also provide such services, for example, to TVP or Canal+.

The Fototeka website, an online photo album of the history of Polish film, was launched by the National Film Archive on 18 November 2009. Since then, digitised photos from film sets and stills have been gradually posted online. Currently, the www.fototeka.fn.org.pl website offers over 180 000 digitised photos from the collections of the National Film Archive. The editors of Fototeka cooperated with the adapter.pl media service addressed to the blind and deaf. The Katarynka Foundation offers several dozen Polish films with subtitles and audio description on its website. In addition to films, adapter.pl also presents film stills from Fototeka. Our media service provides film stills from well-known productions such as: *The Depot of the Dead*, *Ashes and Diamonds*, *Inquest of Pilot Pírx*, *Knights of the Teutonic Order*, *Day of the Wacko*; and productions for children and young people: *Professor Inkblot's Academy*, *Pan Samochodzik i niesamowity dwór* [Mr Automobile and an Incredible Manor], *Friend of the Jolly Devil*, and *In Desert and Wilderness*. They feature audio description (a verbal description of what can be seen in the photo) of the situation, characters, background, and the set design. The brief descriptions also include anecdotes related to a given scene, as well as its significance for the plot of the film.

In 2020, the Institute implemented a stationary programme of activities involving people with special needs, also in its headquarters at 3/5 Wałbrzyska Street, in long-term series such as: *Kino-Kołyska* [The Cradle Cinema], *Klub Seniora* [Seniors' Club], *Szkolna karuzela (U)śmiechu* [The School Carousel of Laughter]; and educational workshops on equality *Inny to nie wróg* [Other Doesn't Mean Enemy].

The Cradle Cinema was a project addressed to people with small children. The screenings took place in a specially arranged cinema (prams, room arrangement, dimmed lights switched on). Viewers used wireless headphones. In 2020, due to the pandemic, only four shows were held: *Shoplifters* on 16 January, *Portrait of a Lady on Fire* on 27 February, *Monsieur Hulot's Holiday* on 16 October, and *The Hater* on 6 November. Approximately 100 people attended the screenings.

Launched in autumn 2019, *Seniors' Club* is a project addressed to our oldest users. In January and February 2020, before activity at our headquarters was interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, it featured two streams of screenings for seniors: one held at 3/5 Wałbrzyska Street and one at the Iluzjon cinema. The former, entitled *I kino stworzyło... gwiazdy* [Then the Cinema Created... the Stars], with an introduction and lectures by Andrzej Bukowiecki, presented films with the world's greatest female stars in cinematography. It opened in January with *The Blue Angel* directed by Josef von Sternberg and continued in February with Jan Batory's *Cure for Love* with the great role of Kalina Jędrusik, whose 90th birthday was celebrated a few days before. The latter series, prepared by Michał Oleszczyk at the Iluzjon cinema, was entitled *W osiem miesięcy dookoła świata – Filmowe podróże* [Around the World in Eight Months – Film Travels]. Before the project was suspended because of the pandemic, we managed to show *Darling* directed by John Schlesinger and *Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears* by Vladimir Menshov. In the absence of Michał Oleszczyk, the lecture for the latter screening was given by Łukasz Jasina. In October 2020, a new season of *Seniors' Club* was launched with Andrzej Bukowiecki's presentation on Humphrey Bogart and *The Maltese Falcon* directed by John Huston. This instalment of the project was to focus on great male movie stars. Unfortunately, the project had to be suspended due to another lockdown. The October screening was held at the Iluzjon cinema.

The School Carousel of Laughter is a workshop on how to function at school and in a peer group to laugh with others rather than be laughed at. It is addressed to children in kindergartens and primary school grades 1–3. The course teaches tolerance towards our differences, different ethnic groups, people with disabilities, and the elderly. Based on presentations and film excerpts, the trainer shows that one can make friends with anyone, suggesting what to do to discover the inner part and true value of another person. The workshop seeks to shift the focus from what someone 'can't do' to how to help them so that they 'can do' it. After a presentation, children prepare their *Album of Friends*. Using images of people from all over the world (of different colour, appearance, age, religion, with disabilities, etc.), the participants choose together in a group photos of those with whom they would most like to make friends, and stick their portraits in their albums. Then, in groups, they present their new friends, explaining their choice by focusing on the positive qualities of a given person. *The School Carousel of Laughter* is an original workshop by Beata Zaborek-

Sroka, Programme Manager at the National Film Archive – Audiovisual Institute.

Between January and December 2019, a total of 21 primary schools from the Mazowieckie Voivodeship attended the workshop. It was held both at schools and our headquarters at 3/5 Wałbrzyska Street. A total of 913 children and 29 teachers participated in the workshop.

Other Doesn't Mean Enemy is another workshop by Beata Zaborek-Sroka, which shows young people how films can break stereotypes, help overcome fear, and teach tolerance. Based on presentations and film excerpts, the trainer discusses the situation and functioning of people with disabilities, mental illnesses, Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), red hair and obesity, as well as the elderly, throughout history. Students are asked the following questions: What does it mean to respect old age? How to find a common denominator for the experience of the elderly and the energy of young people? The trainer highlights problems from history and discusses examples of films that deal with various social fears related to this topic. This project was first presented in 2019 in several secondary schools in Bartoszyce (approx. 400 people). It was continued in schools in Warsaw in the same year. A total of 12 Warsaw-based schools hosted the lecture and presentation, which were attended by 370 students and 15 teachers. The project was included in our programme activities for 2020; however, it was discontinued due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our team at the Education Department commissioned the transcription and preparation of subtitles for materials presented on the Institute's social media, e.g. on Facebook and YouTube, and developed five transcriptions for masterclasses held at the School Film Archive Festival on film criticism, production, promotion, scripts and festivals. In parallel, two transcripts were prepared for School Film Archive webinars: *How to organise a School Film Club?* and *Methods of working with film in school lessons: A student as a director and designer*.

In mid-2020, the Institute signed an agreement with a volunteer using a wheelchair who for several months acted as an accessibility consultant at events organised in the Institute's space. The volunteer came to our summer holiday events – a series of outdoor cinema screenings *Wieczne lato* [Eternal Summer] held on the Institute's patio – and events in early autumn (before the institution had to once again close to the public). She participated in events as a spectator, testing the driveways, lifts, designated places for people with mobility impairments, toilets, etc., reporting

her observations and areas for improvement. As a result, the stairs in the Institute's lobby were properly marked with contrasting tape to facilitate the movement of people with disabilities around our headquarters. Unfortunately, our promising cooperation was interrupted by the second wave of the pandemic.

Given the synergy of online activities, stationary events, and the great involvement of the accessibility coordinator, we were able to implement several accessibility projects in 2020 despite the unfavourable conditions caused by the lockdowns. The database of materials with transcription and audio description, adapted for people with special needs, was expanded. Presentations and educational events dedicated to equal treatment were held and a map of the Institute's building was prepared to facilitate its navigation for people with mobility and visual impairments. These improvements would not have been possible without the initiative and creative thinking of our Accessibility Team.

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CINEMA IN THE FACE OF SPECIAL NEEDS – ACTIVITIES OF THE POLISH FILM INSTITUTE

Polish Film Institute

The Polish Film Institute has provided funding for Polish film productions and their distribution for 16 years. It supports and promotes Polish audio-visual productions pursuant to three acts of law: the Cinematography Act¹, the Act on financial support for audio-visual production², and the Regulation of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage.³

In 2021, the Polish Film Institute distributed PLN 252 million among film makers and institutions. The Institute's budget consists of institutional subsidies from the state budget, transferred by the minister from the

- 1 Act of 30 June 2005 on cinematography (Journal of Laws 2005, No. 132, item 1111), Online Database of Polish Legislation (in Polish: *Internetowy System Aktów Prawnych*, ISAP), <http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU20051321111> [accessed: 3 August 2021].
- 2 Act of 9 November 2018 on financial support for audio-visual production (Journal of Laws 2019, item 50), Online Database of Polish Legislation, <http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU20190000050> [accessed: 3 August 2021].
- 3 Regulation of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage of 31 January 2020 on the transfer of data to the Polish Film Institute by cinema operators, Online Database of Polish Legislation, <http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU20200000257> [accessed: 3 March 2021].

budgetary funds, and payments referred to in articles 19(1)–(5), 6a and 7 of the Cinematography Act.

This budget also covers expenditure on increasing the accessibility of audio-visual culture for people with special needs. They account for a large part of Polish society: 3 million Poles have a certified degree of disability or an equivalent certificate; however, the number of people with disabilities is estimated to be more than twice as high.⁴ The group of people with special needs also includes pregnant women, seniors, and all persons who:

*due to their external or internal features, or because of the circumstances in which they have found themselves, must take additional action or additional measures to overcome barriers in order to participate in various spheres of life on an equal basis with other people.*⁵

It is high time to make participation in culture as easy for people with special needs as it is for an average healthy 18-year-old.

THE ADAPTATION OF FILMS AND CINEMAS

Although the Act on ensuring accessibility for people with special needs⁶ entered into force in July 2019, the Polish Film Institute already introduced a provision into its operational programmes five years ago, obliging producers of feature films and full-length animated films to add audio description. In 2017, this requirement was extended to also include documentaries. Currently, producers must prepare audio description and Subtitles for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (SDH) and submit them with the Digital Source Master (DSM), which is passed on to the National Film Archive – Audiovisual Institute.

From that point in time to the second quarter of 2021, our tentative list of productions that meet these requirements includes 220 titles. Not all

- 4 *Ile jest osób z niepełnosprawnościami w Polsce?* [How many people with disabilities are there in Poland?] <https://www.gov.pl/web/popcwsparcie/ile-jest-osob-z-niepelnosprawnosciami-w-polsce> [accessed: 3 August 2021].
- 5 Act of 19 July 2019 on ensuring accessibility for people with special needs (Journal of Laws of 2019, item 1696), Online Database of Polish Legislation, <https://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU20190001696> [accessed: 3 August 2021].
- 6 *Ibid.*

of them are presently available – some have not had their premieres yet, others are in the process of the final settlement and transfer of the DSM to the National Film Archive – Audiovisual Institute.

In addition to adapting films for people with special needs, it is just as important to increase the accessibility of cinemas. To this end, in 2021, the Polish Film Institute allocated as much as PLN 45 million to the Operational Programme ‘Development of cinemas’. One of its priorities is modernisation, with PLN 3 million earmarked for this purpose. This funding is intended for adapting buildings to the needs of people with disabilities and co-financing durable film equipment for film activities, including equipment for presenting films to people with disabilities (e.g. induction loops, screens, sound system).⁷

This type of funding is available to cinema operators.

PRESENCE ONLINE

The Institute also ensured the accessibility of its website in compliance with the Act of 4 April 2019 on the digital accessibility of websites and mobile applications of public entities. The new version of the website (www.pisf.pl) was launched on 5 March 2020. The accessibility audit conducted by an external service provider showed that our website complies with the Act. For example, it offers a contrast version as well as the possibility to change the size of the text. The same applies to our new website for applications (www.pisf-wnioski.pl), which was released on 26 April 2021.

Last year, our website also featured a calendar of film festivals, where users could not only follow the chronology of all cinematographic events but also check which ones would be in a hybrid or online form. As a result, people for whom the festival offer prior to 2020 was largely unavailable, for example, due to reduced mobility or anxiety disorders, could now avail themselves of it and see the latest Polish film releases.

7 Operational Programmes of the Polish Film Institute for 2021, Polish Film Institute, <https://pisf.pl/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/PO-PISF-2021-16-czerwca-2021.pdf> [accessed: 3 August 2021].

ACTIVITIES ABROAD

In 2019, seeking to promote Polish cinema not only to Polish but also to international audiences, the Polish Film Institute focused on a new priority – Distribution of Polish Films Abroad under the Operational Programme ‘Promotion of Polish Films Abroad’.

The aim of this project is not only to increase the recognition of Polish films on international markets but, above all, to increase their accessibility. This is particularly important for the Polish diaspora, which can at times be excluded from participation in Polish culture and the discussion about Polish cinema.

For the past two years, international distributors have been able to apply for the co-financing of promotional campaigns for feature films before they go into cinema distribution. This mechanism is to encourage more frequent purchase of Polish films. Support for distribution abroad has been provided to such films as Agnieszka Smoczyńska’s *Fuga* [Fugue], Adrian Panek’s *Wilkołak* [Werewolf], Jan Komasa’s *Boże Ciało* [Corpus Christi], Bartosz Kruhlak’s *Supernova*, Robert Gliński’s *Zieja*, and Tomasz Szafrński’s *Władcy Przypad. Stąd do Oblivio* [Rock’n’Roll Eddie]. All listed films have been released in France, Denmark, Norway, the United Kingdom, Spain, etc.

The Institute also supports reviews of Polish films organised abroad. Although many of them could not be held live due to the pandemic, the Operational Programmes of the Polish Film Institute were adapted to the new conditions. For the first time, we were able to support events taking place online, which made access to films easier for many people, attracting larger audiences compared to previous years.

In 2020, reviews of Polish films were held in Albania, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Croatia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Latvia, Paraguay, Russia, Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Ukraine, the United States, Uzbekistan, the United Kingdom, etc.

A REVOLUTION?

A survey conducted in December 2020 by the National Centre for Culture shows that as many as three quarters of Poles missed physical access

to cultural institutions. Specifically, the cinema was indicated by 38% of respondents as a place they wanted to visit the most.⁸

The unflagging popularity of cinema is yet another reason why this branch of cultural industry cannot be indifferent to people with special needs. The Polish Film Institute not only supports film projects and festivals dedicated to the topic of integration but it also continues to work on further improvements in cinema.

At this point, we truly cannot say more about it; however, a revolution is coming. Along with a revelation.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS:

- *Czy Polacy tęsknią za kulturą? Komunikat z badań* [Do Poles miss culture? Survey Report], <https://nck.pl/badania/aktualnosci/kultura-po-epidemii-infografika> [accessed: 3 August 2021].
- *Ile jest osób z niepełnosprawnościami w Polsce?* [How many people with disabilities are there in Poland?] <https://www.gov.pl/web/popcwsparcie/ile-jest-osob-z-niepelnosprawnosciami-w-polsce> [accessed: 3 August 2021].
- Operational Programmes of the Polish Film Institute for 2021, Polish Film Institute, <https://pisf.pl/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/PO-PISF-2021-16-czerwca-2021.pdf> [accessed: 3 August 2021].
- Regulation of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage of 31 January 2020 on the transfer of data to the Polish Film Institute by cinema operators, Online Database of Polish Legislation, <http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU20200000257> [accessed: 3 March 2021].
- Act of 30 June 2005 on cinematography (Journal of Laws 2005, No. 132, item 1111), Online Database of Polish Legislation, <http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU20051321111> [accessed: 3 August 2021].

8 *Czy Polacy tęsknią za kulturą? Komunikat z badań* [Do Poles miss culture? Survey Report], <https://nck.pl/badania/aktualnosci/kultura-po-epidemii-infografika> [accessed: 3 August 2021].

- Act of 9 November 2018 on financial support for audio-visual production (Journal of Laws 2019, item 50), Online Database of Polish Legislation, <http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU20190000050> [accessed: 3 August 2021].
- Act of 19 July 2019 on ensuring accessibility for people with special needs (Journal of Laws of 2019, item 1696), Online Database of Polish Legislation, <https://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU20190001696> [accessed: 3 August 2021].

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POLISH RADIO – ACCESSIBILITY AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES

Polish Radio

Polskie Radio S.A. (hereinafter: Polish Radio) is a sole shareholder company of the State Treasury with its registered seat in Warsaw, and serves as Poland's national public service radio broadcasting organisation. It operates pursuant to the Broadcasting Act of 29 December 1992¹, which defines and regulates radio and television activities. In general terms, Polish Radio's mission is to offer listeners a variety of radio programme services, such as current affairs, cultural, entertainment, educational, news and sports programmes, and provide media services.

THE FUNCTIONING OF POLISH RADIO DURING THE PANDEMIC

After the announcement of the state of pandemic in Poland in 2020, the Management Board of Polish Radio took all necessary steps to minimise

1 Broadcasting Act of 29 December 1992 (Journal of Laws 2018, items 650, 915, 1717), Online Database of Polish Legislation (in Polish: *Internetowy System Aktów Prawnych*, ISAP), <http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/download.xsp/WDU20170001414/U/D20171414Lj.pdf> [accessed: 30 August 2021].

the risk of infection among employees and visitors. Following the guidelines of the central and sanitary authorities, the following measures were implemented:

- Concerts, rehearsals and all events organised by Polish Radio with the participation of an audience and guests were suspended;
- Staff meetings are conducted online;
- A remote/rotation system of working was introduced wherever possible;
- Tours organised by the Media Education Centre and commercial training courses held by the Training Centre were suspended.

In addition:

- All persons in the areas of Polish Radio accessible to the public are obliged to cover their nose and mouth (all employees were provided with protective masks), and comply with the rules of social distancing at workplaces and in all common spaces;
- Body temperature is measured at the entrances to Polish Radio buildings;
- Liquid disinfectants are provided at the entrances to the buildings, in corridors and in recording studios;
- Lifts can be used by only one person at a time, and the use of staircases is recommended;
- The internal post office and restaurant are closed to the general public;
- Offices in buildings and selected rooms are fitted with plexiglass dividers;
- All free entrances to the car park were closed;
- During the summer holidays, work was organised in such a way as to ensure the continuity of activities while enabling employees to take time off.

In the face of the pandemic and the resulting restrictions, it was necessary to immediately adapt to the new conditions. When schools, kindergartens and nurseries were closed, some of our employees used the possibility of free childcare (52 people used 1 385 days of this form of childcare in total in 2020).

THE ACCESSIBILITY OF POLISH RADIO ONE YEAR INTO THE PANDEMIC

The pandemic has proven to be an extremely challenging time for the entire cultural community. Polish Radio is making every effort to provide Polish artists and performers not only with the possibility of contact with

audiences, but also to help them in their artistic development. In 2020, all public radio stations broadcast not only more Polish music but also radio plays, performances and programmes for children written, performed and produced by Polish artists.

In 2021, the Management Board of Polish Radio – taking into account the health and safety of employees – upheld the possibility of a remote/rotation system of working wherever possible. The pandemic restrictions also enforced certain changes in the listeners' beloved show *Lato z Radiem* [Summer with the Radio].

The year 2021 is special to us, as this iconic show of Channel One of Polish Radio is celebrating its 50th anniversary. A variety of attractions were prepared – concerts at unique locations, quizzes with prizes and an interactive radio play – while our reporters, as usual, toured around Poland to discover the most beautiful places for our listeners. The first *Lato z Radiem* was broadcast on 1 July 1971 as a short news service. The show has been broadcast live since 1973.

This year's edition also featured exceptional concerts that could be listened to and watched from anywhere in the world. It was a musical feast not only for the ear but also for the eye with stars performing, for example, in the beautiful scenery of the Książ Castle, the Palace in Nieborów and even in their own homes. Among the artists were Cleo, Maryla Rodowicz, Pectus and De Mono. The premieres of the concerts took place every Friday at 8 pm, both in the audio version on Channel One of Polish Radio and on social media, YouTube and the website of Polish Radio.

The 50th birthday of *Lato z Radiem* also proved to be a great opportunity to review five decades of wonderful music. To this end, Polish Radio released two albums. The first is a box of five CDs with 93 Polish and international song hits that were played on the show throughout the 50 years of its history, including the famous *Clarinet Polka* in the version by Andrzej Smolik from 2018. The second album is a unique vinyl record published in a limited edition of 1 000 copies, with the original version of *Clarinet Polka* and a selection of ten of the most popular Polish songs presented on *Lato z Radiem* over the years.

For two months, the Channel One application was turned into the *Lato z Radiem* application, allowing listeners to easily switch between concerts, live broadcasts and our reporters' tour.

THE ACCESSIBILITY OF POLISH RADIO'S BUILDINGS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

All buildings of Polish Radio are adapted to the needs of people with disabilities.

Building O-1 (77/85 Niepodległości Avenue) offers a car park with two designated parking spaces for people with disabilities. It features an external lift and an automatic entrance door allowing visitors with special needs to enter. Wheelchair platform lifts were installed on the internal stairs in the lobby. The ground floor toilet in the lobby is adapted to the needs of people with disabilities. The lifts in the building enable people with disabilities to move between floors.

Building O-1 bis (77/85 Niepodległości Avenue) is also adapted for visitors with disabilities. It features an automatic door without thresholds. In front of the entrance there is a driveway and in the car park there are two designated spaces for people with disabilities. Adapted toilets may be found on the ground floor by the entrance and on the third floor. People using wheelchairs can move between floors using internal lifts. Two of them feature panels with Braille descriptions for the blind.

In the car park of Building O-2 (59 Modzelewskiego Street) there is a designated parking space for a person with a disability and a driveway for wheelchairs. Using the lift, visitors with disabilities can move between the lower and upper floors. Adapted toilets are available on the ground floor – one by the entrance and another in a different part of the building. From the ground floor visitors can get to the Witold Lutosławski Polish Radio Concert Studio, which has two designated places for people using wheelchairs.

People using wheelchairs can enter Building O-3 (3/5/7 Myśliwiecka Street) through the door located on the right side of the lobby next to the reception desk. A portable ramp is available on the lobby stairs. On the ground floor, there is an adapted toilet and a lift offering access to the first and second floors and to Level -1. Using this lift, visitors with disabilities can also get to concerts at the Agnieszka Osiecka M-1 Music Studio of Polish Radio and to the Broadcast Studios of Channel Three of Polish Radio. The car park of Building O-3 features two designated spaces for people with disabilities.

ACCESSIBILITY FOR LISTENERS – DEVELOPMENT OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES

Polish Radio is widely accessible to listeners – both in terms of its rich offer, adapted for people of different ages and needs, and access to all radio stations of the public service broadcaster.

Polish Radio is the only nationwide radio broadcaster that, in addition to the analogue FM technology, makes all its programmes available also in the DAB+ technology. Since late 2020, Polish Radio's technical coverage in the DAB+ system has been approx. 44% of Poland's area, reaching approx. 67% of potential users (over 25 million people). Currently, the digital signal is already available in 33 cities and areas nearby, as well as on the Internet (both through websites and applications for mobile devices). Digital Audio Broadcasting is a technology that offers additional functions for users:

- Easy selection of radio stations: based on station names rather than just frequency search;
- User-friendly navigation: limited to one button;
- Clear sound without noise: no sound distortion or noise, even when in motion;
- Planning in advance: users can programme to listen to or record a broadcast up to a week before;
- Additional services: possibility to send text, graphic and slideshow files.

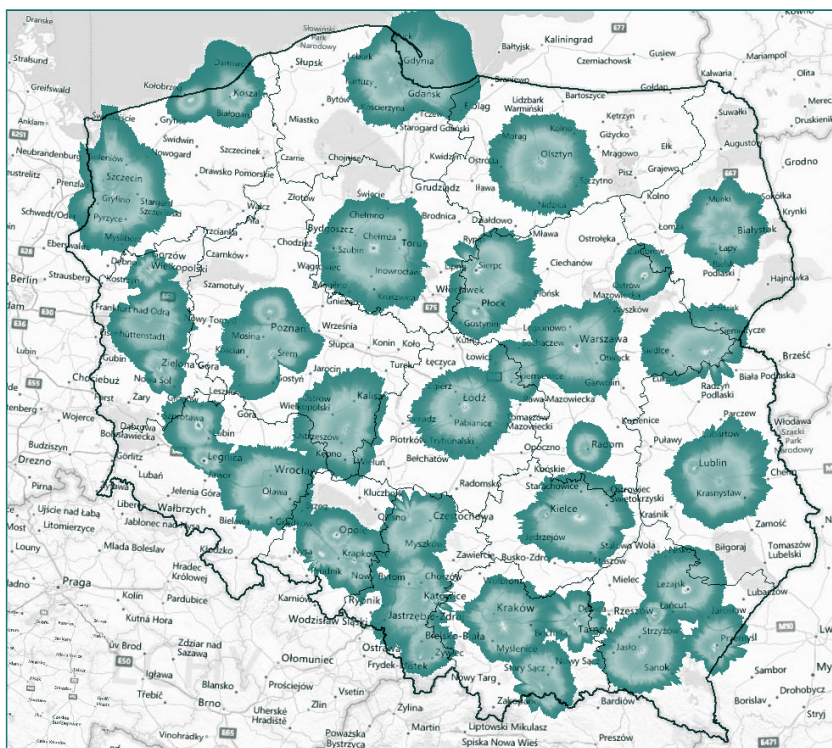
None of these functions is available in the analogue FM system. The DAB+ technology is successfully developing in many places across Europe.

All Polish Radio stations and programmes are also available online, both via websites and dedicated Android and iOS mobile applications. We use these channels to offer a wide range of elaborate multimedia content such as live video transmissions from broadcast studios, broadcasts of concerts and other important events. This approach is in line with Polish Radio's development strategy for 2020–2025, in which the development of various channels – including the Internet and multimedia ones – is the key to reaching wider audiences. As a digital radio broadcasting technology, DAB+ is intended to ultimately replace the analogue FM broadcasting system, as evidenced by examples from many European countries.

As a public service broadcaster committed to the development of the radio market and the introduction of the cutting-edge technology to en-

hance users' experience, Polish Radio is fully prepared to support technological progress in this area. We are planning to expand the DAB+ network in most voivodeships in Poland by the end of 2021 (apart from Lubuskie, Opolskie, Podkarpackie and Świętokrzyskie).

MAP DEPICTING THE APPROXIMATE COVERAGE OF THE DAB+ MOBILE DIGITAL MULTIPLEX BY POLISH RADIO (AS OF 31 DECEMBER 2020)



Source: Technology Office of Polish Radio, own study

The aim of this expansion is to improve the coverage of and access to all programmes of Polish Radio along critical transport routes and in larger cities.

In October last year, Polish Radio launched another programme service – *Polskie Radio Kierowców* [Drivers' Radio Poland], which is also available in the DAB+ technology and online (via the dedicated website and mobile application).

Currently, the DAB+ digital multiplex offers access to nine programmes of Polish Radio:

- *Jedynka* – Channel One;
- *Dwójka* – Channel Two;
- *Trójka* – Channel Three;
- *Czwórka* – Channel Four;
- *Polskie Radio 24* – Polish Radio 24;
- *Polskie Radio dla Zagranicy* – Radio Poland;
- *Radio Dzieciom* – Radio for Children;
- *Polskie Radio Chopin* – Chopin Radio Poland;
- *Polskie Radio Kierowców* – Drivers’ Radio Poland.

In 2023, we plan to launch a new radio channel. Given the division of the DAB+ multiplex space, in which Polish Radio is guaranteed a total of ten programmes, we intend to make full use of its potential.

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TELEVISION CHANNEL ACCOMMODATIONS FOR PEOPLE WITH A VISUAL OR HEARING DISABILITY. REGULATIONS, PRACTICE, TRENDS

National Broadcasting Council

Television is one of the most fundamental carriers of culture present in our lives on a daily basis. It provides access to information, films, documentaries, concerts, sports and cultural events, and many forms of entertainment. Naturally, access to the television offer is more difficult for people with a visual or hearing disability who are excluded from participation in this common cultural good.

This article presents the current regulations regarding the accessibility of audiovisual content for people with a visual or hearing disability. It discusses solutions from Poland and other European countries, showing how they are used in practice on the Polish television market.

THE EUROPEAN UNION AND INTERNATIONAL REGULATIONS

Ratified in 2000, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union states that the European Union (EU) recognises and respects the right of persons with disabilities to benefit from measures designed to ensure

their independence, social and occupational integration, and participation in the life of the community.¹

One of the necessary conditions for the integration and participation of persons with disabilities in social and cultural life is, as enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities², to ensure that they can enjoy the fullest possible access to the current offer of audiovisual media services, including television programmes. Television broadcasters have an array of accommodations dedicated to people with a visual or hearing disability – sign language, subtitling, audio description and user-friendly navigation – to improve accessibility. To this end, Article 7 of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive 2010/13/EU³ obliges the EU Member States to encourage media service providers (i.e. broadcasters and providers of on-demand audiovisual media services, VOD) under their jurisdiction to ensure that their services are gradually made accessible to people with a visual or hearing disability.⁴ This provision was elaborated on and further strengthened in Directive 2018/1808/EU amending the Audiovisual Media Services Directive 2010/13/EU⁵, according to which the EU Member States should ensure, without undue delay, that services provided by media service providers under their jurisdiction are made continuously and progressively more accessible to persons with disabilities.⁶ In addition, the EU Member States should actively pursue this commitment by looking for ways to share content with people with a visual or hearing

- 1 Article 26 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (OJ C 202, 2016).
- 2 The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, signed in New York on 13 December 2006 (Journal of Laws 2012, item 1169).
- 3 Directive 2010/13/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 March 2010 on the coordination of certain provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in Member States concerning the provision of audiovisual media services.
- 4 Article 7 of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive 2010/13/EU.
- 5 Directive (EU) 2018/1808 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 November 2018 amending Directive 2010/13/EU on the coordination of certain provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in Member States concerning the provision of audiovisual media services in view of changing market realities.
- 6 Article 7(1) of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive 2018/1808/EU.

disability. Accessibility requirements should be met in a progressive and continuous process, while taking into account the practical and unavoidable constraints that could prevent full accessibility, such as sports event or concert broadcasts in real time.⁷

The EU Member States are also obliged to ensure that media service providers report on a regular basis to the national regulatory authorities or bodies (in Poland, the National Broadcasting Council) on the implementation of these measures, and then, based on the data obtained from the providers, to report to the European Commission every three years on the implementation of this task.⁸

Finally, the EU Member States should encourage media service providers, whether through legislative or other instruments including self-regulation, to develop accessibility action plans in respect of continuously and progressively making their services more accessible to persons with disabilities, which should be communicated to national regulatory authorities or bodies.⁹

EXAMPLES OF LEGAL MEASURES ADOPTED IN THE EU MEMBER STATES

1. The approach indicated in the Audiovisual Media Services Directives 2010/13/EU and 2018/1808/EU, to continuously and progressively make audiovisual programmes more accessible to persons with disabilities, was implemented in most EU Member States through applicable legislation obliging television broadcasters to annually expand their programme offer with accommodations for people with visual or hearing impairments.¹⁰
2. The solution that seems to prevail on the media services market is to determine the percentage share (or number of hours) of a television channel that should include the particular accommodations: subtitles for people with hearing impairments, sign language and audio description.¹¹

7 Motive 22 in the preamble to the Audiovisual Media Services Directive 2018/1808/EU.

8 Article 7(2) of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive 2018/1808/EU.

9 Article 7(3) of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive 2018/1808/EU.

10 Such legislation was introduced at the national level, for example, by Belgium, the Netherlands, Ireland and the United Kingdom. Data from: *Accessibility of TV and on-demand audiovisual media services*, a conference organised by the European Platform of Regulatory Authorities in Athens in 2019, <https://www.epra.org/>.

11 For example, in France, Greece, Sweden, Switzerland and Portugal. Data from: *Accessibility of TV...*, op. cit.

3. Some national legislators specify catalogues of channel types that should primarily provide the said accommodations such as information services and communications important to society.¹² In addition, some of them regulate the minimum time during which these channel types, particularly important to people with disabilities, must be disseminated with accommodations.¹³
4. Another solution, albeit adopted relatively less frequently, combines the obligation to provide accommodations for people with disabilities with prime-time screening slots.¹⁴
5. Selected EU Member States have concluded that the obligation arising from Article 7 of both Directives applies either exclusively¹⁵ or primarily to public television channels, assuming that public service broadcasters should, by virtue of their special status, be more involved in the integration process of persons with disabilities.¹⁶
6. However, regardless of these regulations, there is a clear tendency to change the current approach of national legislators and progressively standardise the level of obligations of both groups of broadcasters to ensure access to the programme offer for people with disabilities.
7. Focus has been shifted to the market power of broadcasters/channels, typically measured as audience share. People with disabilities are no longer viewed as a niche audience but as an increasingly larger and more significant group of users. As a result, if a given channel enjoys high audience ratings (which translates into greater market power and higher revenues),

12 This measure was adopted, for example, by France, Greece and Macedonia. Data from: *Accessibility of TV...*, op. cit.

13 For example, Romania requires that at least 30 minutes of daily news services be broadcast with accommodations for persons with visual or hearing impairments. Data from: *Accessibility of TV...*, op. cit.

14 This model was adopted, for example, in France and the United Kingdom. Data from: *Accessibility of TV...*, op. cit.

15 In Denmark, the obligation to provide accommodations for persons with disabilities was imposed solely on the public service broadcaster, with the exclusion of commercial broadcasters. Data from: *Accessibility of TV...*, op. cit.

16 For example, greater obligations have been imposed on public service broadcasters in Belgium, the Czech Republic, Switzerland, Spain, Ireland, Finland, the United Kingdom, Moldova, the Netherlands, Norway, Romania, Portugal, Serbia and Slovakia. Data from: *Accessibility of TV...*, op. cit.

its contribution to providing accommodations for people with visual and hearing impairments should be proportionally higher.¹⁷ The criterion of audience ratings and, consequently, of revenue as a threshold for required accessibility accommodations is also important for smaller broadcasters, for whom the costs of compliance are a relatively considerable financial burden compared to larger broadcasters.¹⁸

8. Another solution used on the European market is the division into free and paid or coded and uncoded programmes. In some countries, the requirements regarding television offer accessibility either apply only to uncoded programme services or are correspondingly stricter.¹⁹
9. Finally, a group of special (niche) channels can be distinguished which, due to their profile or target audience, could have difficulty complying with the accessibility obligations. This category includes, for example, news services, music and children's shows, and sports event broadcasts. Subtitling in these cases is frequently difficult as many of them are live broadcasts (news services or sports event broadcasts) or are addressed to children unable to follow subtitles or sign language interpretation. In the case of music channels, some countries abandon certain obligations and focus, for example, on providing subtitles for people with a hearing disability only for designated parts of the channel. Some channels may even be exempt from accessibility requirements whatsoever.²⁰

17 In Hungary, both public service and commercial broadcasters with a market share of above 15% must provide accommodations for people with hearing impairments for nearly all their programmes. Sweden introduced a general obligation to provide accommodations for people with disabilities: (1) without specifying the percentage share or hourly limit for channels with an audience share of below 1%; and (2) with additional specific requirements for channels with an audience share of above 1%. Data from: *Accessibility of TV...*, op. cit.

18 For example, the French system reduces sign language requirements for broadcasters with a turnover between EUR 3 million and EUR 7 million, while broadcasters with revenues of less than EUR 3 million are entirely exempt from this obligation. Data from: *Accessibility of TV...*, op. cit.

19 For example, in Bulgaria and Spain, the obligation to provide accessibility accommodations was imposed only on broadcasters of uncoded programme services. Data from: *Accessibility of TV...*, op. cit.

20 In Belgium, the accessibility requirements do not apply to teleshopping channels and channels addressed to children under the age of eight.

10. Nevertheless, many EU Member States have confined themselves to rather general provisions, mostly repeating the encouragement expressed in the Audiovisual Media Services Directives calling for providing accommodations for persons with disabilities, without introducing specific rules regarding the percentage requirements.²¹

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR PEOPLE WITH A VISUAL OR HEARING DISABILITY IN POLISH REGULATIONS

In order to ensure access to at least part of the television offer for people with a visual or hearing disability, the Polish legislator introduced into the national regulations, i.e. the Broadcasting Act²², the requirement for accommodations for this group of users to be at a level corresponding to at least 50% of the quarterly broadcasting time, excluding the time allocated to advertisements or teleshopping.²³ The adoption of a minimum percentage share featuring accommodations exceeds the requirements of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive 2010/13/EU, which only calls for the EU Member States to encourage media service providers to ensure accessibility.²⁴ This level of accommodations is a target expected to be guaranteed by 2024. Until then, broadcasters are obliged to progressively increase the percentage share of channels with accommodations: to at

In Finland, broadcasters are not obliged to add subtitles in music and sports channels. France's audiovisual media regulator, CSA, introduced a number of exemptions for niche channels which had difficulties in meeting the subtitling percentage requirements due to the type of content or target audience, e.g. for news services, children's or sports channels. Data from: *Accessibility of TV...*, op. cit.

21. Denmark, Germany, Lithuania, Estonia, Croatia, Latvia, Luxembourg and Slovenia have opted for soft regulation based on a system of incentives. Data from: *Accessibility of TV...*, op. cit.
22. Broadcasting Act of 29 December 1992 (Journal of Laws 2020, item 805), Online Database of Polish Legislation (in Polish: *Internetowy System Aktów Prawnych*, ISAP), <http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/download.xsp/WDU20170001414/U/D20171414Lj.pdf> [accessed: 30 August 2021].
23. Article 18a, section 1 of the Broadcasting Act.
24. See Footnote no. 4.

least 15% of the quarterly transmission time in 2019, to 25% in 2020–2021, and to 35% in the following two years.

Pursuant to the implementing act, the National Broadcasting Council²⁵, in accordance with the authorisation under article 18a, section 2 of the Broadcasting Act, regulated in detail the issues regarding: (1) the type of accommodations for people with disabilities (Audio Description, Subtitles for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Sign Language)²⁶, with their percentage shares in the total broadcasting time of a given channel depending on the broadcast time, nature and type²⁷; (2) lower channel percentage shares for broadcasts featuring accommodations²⁸; (3) the types of channels for which broadcasters are not obliged to introduce the accommodations²⁹; and, finally, (4) the means of informing the public of the date, time and duration of broadcasts with accommodations, with a specification of their type.³⁰ The Regulation of the National Broadcasting Council distinguishes between channels depending on the audiovisual content they offer and the resulting objective difficulties in providing accommodations (e.g. information services, music channels), as well as those caused by the specific profile

- 25 Regulation of the National Broadcasting Council of 15 November 2018 on accommodations in television channels for persons with a visual or hearing disability (Journal of Laws 2018, item 2261), Online Database of Polish Legislation, <http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU20180002261> [accessed: 30 August 2021].
- 26 The types and definitions of accommodations are specified in §2 of the Regulation of the National Broadcasting Council.
- 27 For example, §3 of the said Regulation of the National Broadcasting Council establishes lower percentage shares for channels of a specialised profile (e.g. news services, films, children's channels, socio-religious channels).
- 28 For example, depending on the population coverage of a given channel (§5 of the Regulation of the National Broadcasting Council) or the audience share (§7 of the Regulation of the National Broadcasting Council).
- 29 In accordance with §10 of the Regulation of the National Broadcasting Council, broadcasters of channels distributed exclusively in telecommunications networks other than those used for terrestrial or satellite broadcasting and datacasting services, whose population coverage does not exceed 500 000 people, are not obliged to introduce accommodations for people with disabilities.
- 30 §12 of the Regulation of the National Broadcasting Council.

of the target audience (e.g. children's channels). The Council also took into account the financial capacity of smaller broadcasters and additional responsibilities (e.g. organisational) arising from compliance with the accessibility requirements. As a result, the Regulation introduces relief and a variety of exemptions for broadcasters of local channels with population coverage lower than half a million people.

These provisions were included in the Regulation of the National Broadcasting Council of 15 November 2018 on accommodations on television channels for persons with a visual or hearing disability (hereinafter: Regulation).

In accordance with article 53, section 1 of the Broadcasting Act, broadcasters violating the provisions on a minimum percentage share of channels with accommodations for people with disabilities are subject to a financial penalty. Complying with its statutory obligations, the Council initiated a number of administrative proceedings against broadcasters failing to meet the requirements resulting from article 18a in connection with the provisions of the Regulation, imposing the said sanctions on some of them.³¹

The applicable doctrine³² dictates that article 18a of the Broadcasting Act, discussed herein, also seeks to implement the provisions of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland, in particular articles 32 (the principle of equality) and 69 (the provision of aid for people with disabilities).

31 Decision No. DM-2/2016 of 1 July 2016, Decision No. DM-3/2016 of 1 July 2016, Decision No. 14/2016 of 21 December 2016, Decision No. 17/2016 of 23 December 2016, Decision No. DM-13-2020 of 30 September 2020, Decision No. DM-16-2020 of 26 October 2020, Decision No. DM-17-2020 of 26 October 2020.

32 *Ustawa o radiofonii i telewizji. Komentarz* [The Broadcasting Act. A Commentary], S. Piątek, W. Dziomdziora, K. Wojciechowski (Eds), Warsaw 2014, p. 232; *Ustawa o radiofonii i telewizji. Komentarz* [The Broadcasting Act. A Commentary], A. Niewęglowski, K. Chałubińska-Jentkiewicz, M. Chrzanowski et al. (Eds), Warsaw 2021, p. 289.

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF OBLIGATIONS TO INTRODUCE ACCOMMODATIONS FOR PEOPLE WITH A VISUAL OR HEARING DISABILITY IN TELEVISION BROADCASTS

Broadcasters of television programmes submit quarterly reports to the National Broadcasting Council on the transmission of broadcasts with accommodations for people with visual and hearing disabilities. They record all such broadcasts specifying their title, time of broadcast and duration. The reports provide information on broadcasts with:

- Audio Description (AD) – a verbal description of the visual content;
- Subtitles for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (SDH) – captions visible on the screen that combine dialogues and narration while distinguishing the characters in a dialogue and providing additional captions with a description of sound effects and background sounds, or subtitles of only dialogues and narration classified as SDH with a reduction factor of 0.7;
- Sign Language (SL) interpretation.

Television broadcasters must ensure a percentage share of broadcasts with accommodations on their channels at the levels specified in the Regulation of the National Broadcasting Council for one of ten groups of channels presented in the table below:

REQUIREMENTS FOR 2020–2021 REGARDING THE PERCENTAGE SHARE OF BROADCASTS WITH ACCOMMODATIONS ON CHANNELS PURSUANT TO THE REGULATION (IN %)

REGU- LATION	CHANNELS	MINIMUM SHARE FOR 2020–2021 SPECIFIED IN THE REGULATION		
		AD	SDH	SL
§ 3.1	containing not less than 50% news or current affairs/journalistic broadcasts	-	22	3
§ 3.2	containing not less than 50% feature films	3.5	21.5	-
§ 3.3	containing not less than 50% children's shows	10	5.0	10
§ 3.4	containing not less than 50% socio-religious broadcasts	1.5	21	2.5

REGU- LATION	CHANNELS	MINIMUM SHARE FOR 2020–2021 SPECIFIED IN THE REGULATION		
		AD	SDH	SL
§ 4	of universal nature and channels with a specialised profile other than those indicated in §3	3.5	20	1.5
§ 5	distributed through terrestrial networks with population coverage of not more than 500 000 people (local channels)	1	5	0.5
§ 6	pursuing their specialisation profile through the distribution of music broadcasts	-	12.5	-
CHANNELS WITH AN AUDIENCE SHARE OF BELOW 1%				
§ 7.1	containing not less than 50% news or current affairs/journalistic broadcasts	-	11	1.5
§ 7.2	containing not less than 50% feature films	1.75	10.75	-
§ 8	of universal nature and channels with a specialised profile other than those indicated in §7	1.75	10.0	0.75

The charts below present the degrees of implementation of the requirements specified in the Regulation in five quarters, starting from the first quarter (Q1) of 2020 to the first quarter (Q1) of 2021, for all channel groups listed in the table.

PERCENTAGE SHARE OF BROADCASTS WITH ACCOMMODATIONS ON CHANNELS CONTAINING NOT LESS THAN 50% NEWS OR CURRENT AFFAIRS/JOURNALISTIC BROADCASTS

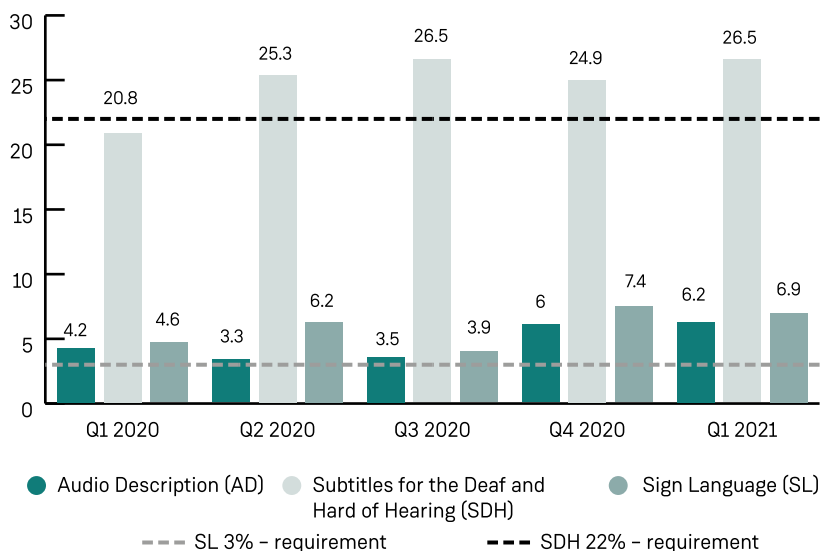
This group featured three news channels with high audience ratings: TVN24, Polsat News and TVP INFO. Other news channels are included in the category of channels with an audience share of below 1%.³³

Broadcasters of news channels are not required to provide audio description. Nevertheless, such broadcasts could be found in the offer of the listed channels, with their percentage share in the quarterly transmission time³⁴ estimated at between 3.3% and 6.2%.

33 In accordance with §9 of the Regulation, for channels to which more than one of the conditions referred to in §§ 5 to 8 apply, broadcasters shall, at their own discretion, comply with only one of the applicable provisions.

34 The transmission (broadcasting) time is calculated without the advertising and teleshopping slots.

PERCENTAGE SHARE OF BROADCASTS WITH ACCOMMODATIONS ON CHANNELS CONTAINING NOT LESS THAN 50% NEWS OR CURRENT AFFAIRS/JOURNALISTIC BROADCASTS (§3.1 OF THE REGULATION)



Source: Office of the National Broadcasting Council based on own data

Information channels provide subtitles and sign language interpretation for people with hearing disabilities. In the first quarter of 2020 and the subsequent periods, the average percentage share of broadcasts with subtitles exceeded the required level of 22%. Broadcasts with sign language interpretation were provided to a sufficient degree, while in the last two quarters, their share was even more than twice as high as required by the Regulation.

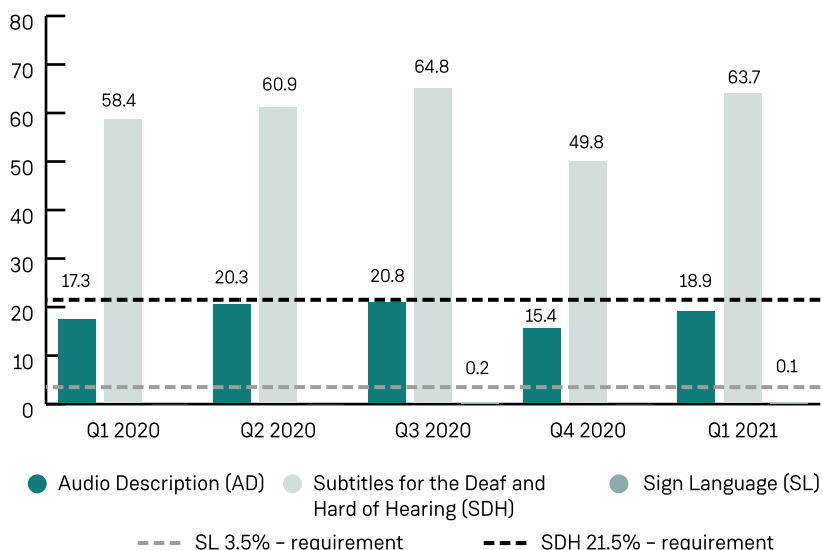
PERCENTAGE SHARE OF BROADCASTS WITH ACCOMMODATIONS ON CHANNELS CONTAINING NOT LESS THAN 50% FEATURE FILMS

This category included two channels: TVN 7 and TVP Seriale. Other film channels have low audience shares and are included in the group of channels referred to in §7.2 of the Regulation.

Although broadcasters of film channels are not obliged to use sign language interpretation, some of their broadcasts occasionally featured this type of accommodation. Hard-of-hearing viewers of these channels are offered subtitles. As the graph below shows, this accommodation is

used very often – in more than half of the broadcasts – despite their minimum percentage share set at the level of only 21.5%. The required level of broadcasts with audio description, enabling access to films for people with visual disabilities, is 3.5%. Film broadcasters also complied with this requirement with a significant surplus – between 15.4% and 20.8%.

PERCENTAGE SHARE OF BROADCASTS WITH ACCOMMODATIONS ON CHANNELS CONTAINING NOT LESS THAN 50% FEATURE FILMS (§3.2 OF THE REGULATION)



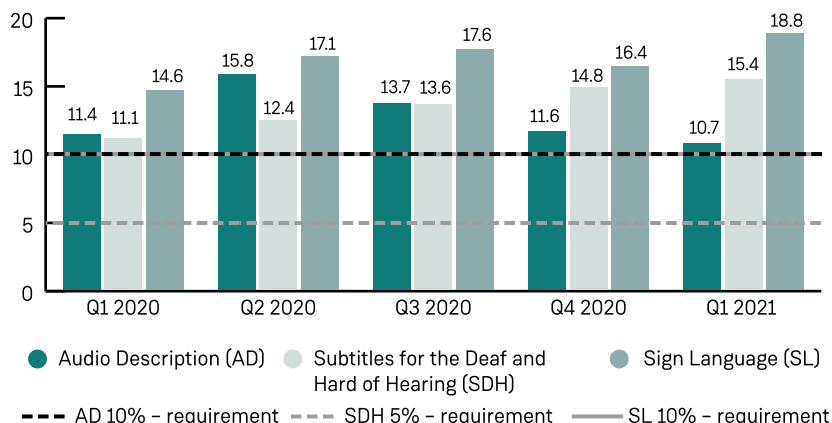
Source: Office of the National Broadcasting Council based on own data

PERCENTAGE SHARE OF BROADCASTS WITH ACCOMMODATIONS ON CHANNELS CONTAINING NOT LESS THAN 50% CHILDREN'S SHOWS

The broadcasters of TVP ABC and TeleTOON+ included their channels in this category despite the fact that the latter has an audience share of below 1%.

In accordance with the Regulation, children with visual and hearing disabilities should have access to at least 10% of broadcasts with accommodations in the form of audio description and sign language interpretation. In addition, the Regulation stipulates that 5% of the transmission (broadcasting) time should be allocated to broadcasts with Subtitles for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Broadcasters of children's channels complied with these requirements with a surplus.

PERCENTAGE SHARE OF BROADCASTS WITH ACCOMMODATIONS ON CHANNELS CONTAINING NOT LESS THAN 50% CHILDREN'S SHOWS (§3.3 OF THE REGULATION)

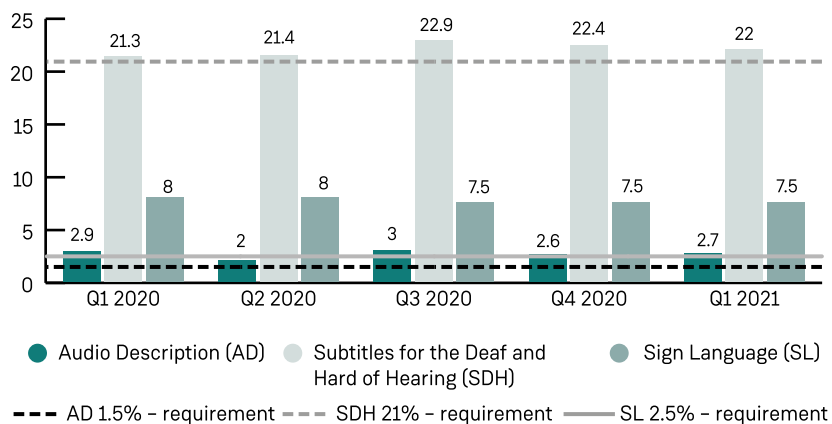


Source: Office of the National Broadcasting Council based on own data

PERCENTAGE SHARE OF BROADCASTS WITH ACCOMMODATIONS ON CHANNELS CONTAINING NOT LESS THAN 50% SOCIO-RELIGIOUS BROADCASTS

Telewizja Trwam was the only channel listed in this category.

PERCENTAGE SHARE OF BROADCASTS WITH ACCOMMODATIONS ON CHAN- NELS CONTAINING NOT LESS THAN 50% SOCIO-RELIGIOUS BROADCASTS (§3.4 OF THE REGULATION)



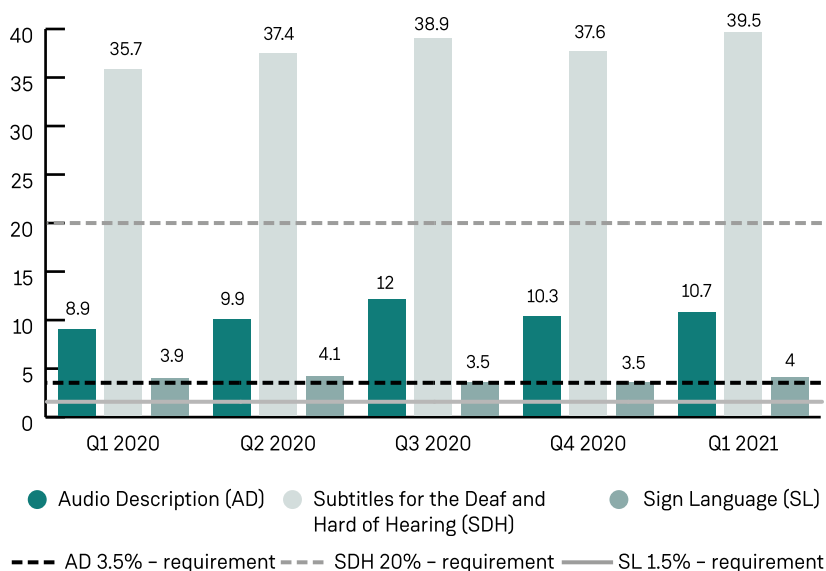
Source: Office of the National Broadcasting Council based on own data

The broadcaster complied with all the requirements of the Regulation, with the share of broadcasts with sign language interpretation being three times higher than the required 2.5%.

PERCENTAGE SHARE OF BROADCASTS WITH ACCOMMODATIONS ON CHANNELS OF UNIVERSAL NATURE AND CHANNELS WITH A SPECIALISED PROFILE

This group included 15 channels listed as: (1) universal – Canal+ 1, Canal+ Dokument, POLSAT, PULS 2, TV PULS, TV 4, TVN, TVP1 and TVP2; and (2) specialised – Polsat Seriale, STUDIOMED TV, TV 6, TTV, TVP HD and TVP SPORT.

PERCENTAGE SHARE OF BROADCASTS WITH ACCOMMODATIONS ON CHANNELS OF UNIVERSAL NATURE AND CHANNELS WITH A SPECIALISED PROFILE (§4 OF THE REGULATION)



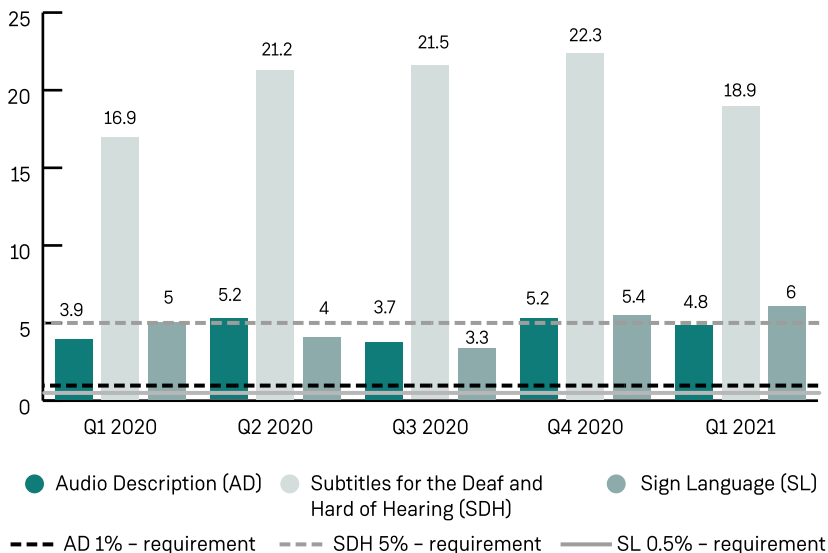
Source: Office of the National Broadcasting Council based on own data

PERCENTAGE SHARE OF BROADCASTS WITH ACCOMMODATIONS ON LOCAL CHANNELS DISTRIBUTED THROUGH TERRESTRIAL NETWORKS

Two channels were included in this category: TVC and TVS. The percentage shares for broadcasters of such channels specified in the Regulation are low: 1% of their broadcasts must contain audio description, 5% must

feature Subtitles for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and 0.5% must provide sign language interpretation. Nevertheless, the said broadcasters included many more shows with these accommodations in their offer.

PERCENTAGE SHARE OF BROADCASTS WITH ACCOMMODATIONS
ON CHANNELS DISTRIBUTED THROUGH TERRESTRIAL NETWORKS
WITH POPULATION COVERAGE OF NOT MORE THAN 500 000 PEOPLE
(§5 OF THE REGULATION)



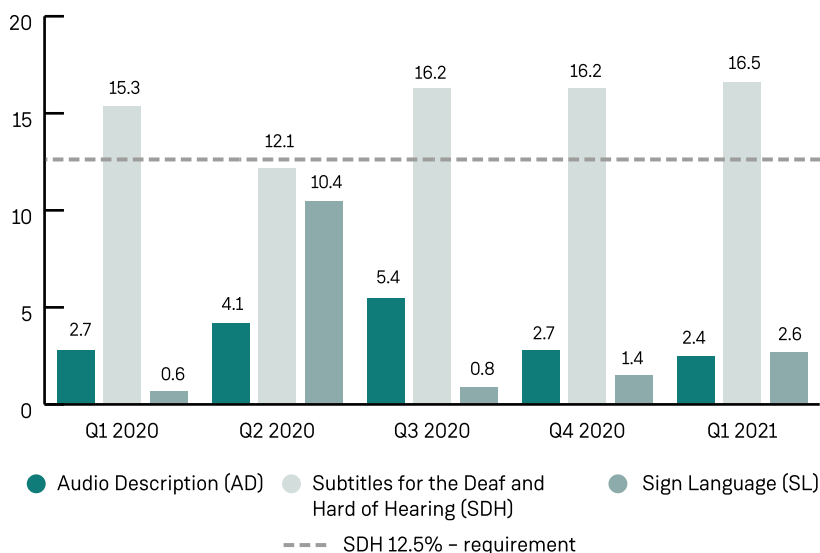
Source: Office of the National Broadcasting Council based on own data

**PERCENTAGE SHARE OF BROADCASTS WITH ACCOMMODATIONS
ON SPECIALISED MUSIC CHANNELS**

This group included 14 channels: 4FUN DANCE, 4fun.tv, Disco Polo Music, Eska TV EXTRA, Eska ROCK TV, ESKA TV, GOLD TV (known as TO! TV until 19 June 2020), Kino Polska Muzyka, POLO TV, NUTA.TV, POLSAT MUSIC, POWER TV, STARS.TV and Vox Music TV.

Broadcasters of music channels are obliged to provide accommodations only in the form of Subtitles for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (SDH). In the second quarter of 2020, the average share of broadcasts with SDH was lower than the required level of 12.5%, and slightly higher in the remaining periods. Although not obliged to do so, the listed music channel broadcasters also provided audio description and sign language interpretation.

PERCENTAGE SHARE OF BROADCASTS WITH ACCOMMODATIONS
ON CHANNELS PURSUING THEIR SPECIALISATION PROFILE THROUGH
THE DISTRIBUTION OF MUSIC BROADCASTS (§6 OF THE REGULATION)



Source: Office of the National Broadcasting Council based on own data

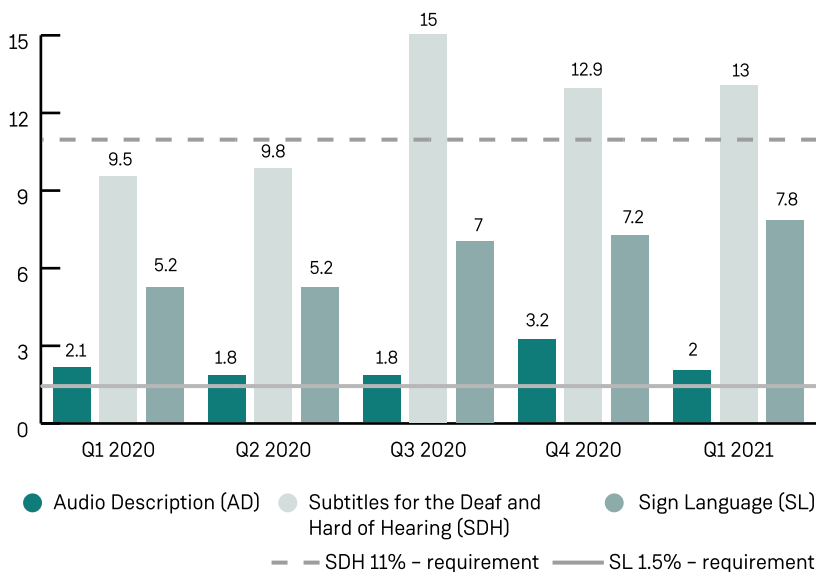
**PERCENTAGE SHARE OF BROADCASTS WITH ACCOMMODATIONS
ON CHANNELS WITH AN AUDIENCE SHARE OF BELOW 1%, CONTAINING
NOT LESS THAN 50% NEWS OR CURRENT AFFAIRS/JOURNALISTIC
BROADCASTS**

This was a large group of channels (21) that included: SUPERSTACJA, Telewizja Republika, Telewizja WPOLSC.PL, TVN24 Biznes i Świat, TVP Vilnius, TVP3 Białystok, TVP3 Bydgoszcz, TVP3 Gdańsk, TVP3 Gorzów Wlkp., TVP3 Katowice, TVP3 Kielce, TVP3 Kraków, TVP3 Lublin, TVP3 Łódź, TVP3 Olsztyn, TVP3 Opole, TVP3 Poznań, TVP3 Rzeszów, TVP3 Szczecin, TVP3 Warszawa and TVP3 Wrocław.

The broadcasters of these channels are obliged to publish programmes with Subtitles for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (SDH) and with sign language interpretation. The average share of broadcasts with SDH in the quarterly transmission time was lower than expected in the first and second quarters of 2020; however, it exceeded the prescribed minimum in the following quarters. In contrast, there were significantly more broadcasts with sign language interpretation in each quarter than indicated by

the Regulation: between 5.2% and 7.8% compared to the required 1.5%. Certain broadcasts were also made accessible to people with visual disabilities through audio description.

PERCENTAGE SHARE OF BROADCASTS WITH ACCOMMODATIONS ON CHANNELS WITH AN AUDIENCE SHARE OF BELOW 1%, CONTAINING NOT LESS THAN 50% NEWS OR CURRENT AFFAIRS/JOURNALISTIC BROADCASTS (§7.1 OF THE REGULATION)



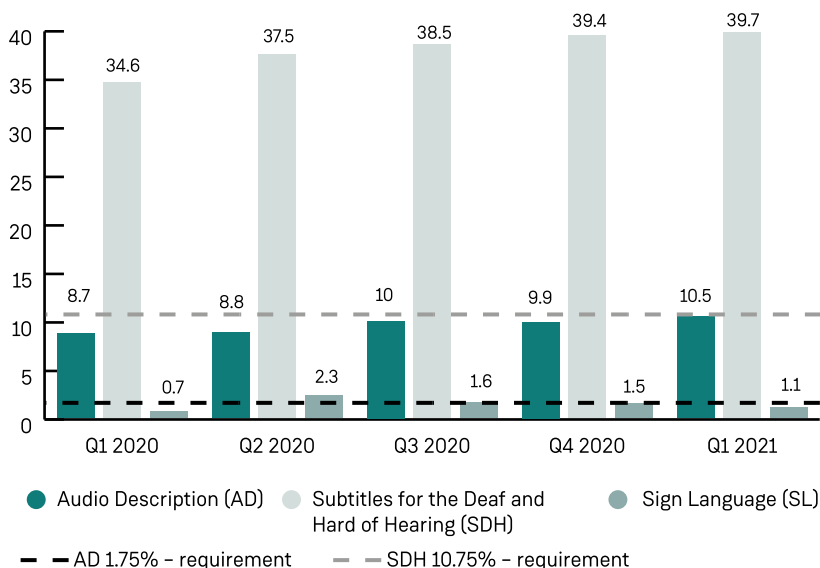
Source: Office of the National Broadcasting Council based on own data

PERCENTAGE SHARE OF BROADCASTS WITH ACCOMMODATIONS ON CHANNELS WITH AN AUDIENCE SHARE OF BELOW 1%, CONTAINING NOT LESS THAN 50% FEATURE FILMS

Eight channels were listed in the category of film channels with a low audience share: ale kino+, ATM ROZRYWKA TV, CANAL+ FILM, Canal+ Seriele, KINO POLSKA, Polsat Doku, POLSAT FILM and STOPKLATKA. Similarly to film channels with higher audience ratings, these channels are also required to provide audio description and Subtitles for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (SDH); however, the levels required for them are lower and amount to 1.75% and 10.75%, respectively. The broadcasters complied with these requirements with a significant surplus, allocating between 34.7% and 39.7% of the broadcasting time to broadcasts with SDH, and between 8.7% and 20.5% to those with audio description. In ad-

dition, the channels occasionally featured broadcasts with sign language interpretation.

PERCENTAGE SHARE OF BROADCASTS WITH ACCOMMODATIONS
ON CHANNELS WITH AN AUDIENCE SHARE OF BELOW 1%, CONTAINING
NOT LESS THAN 50% FEATURE FILMS (§7.2 OF THE REGULATION)

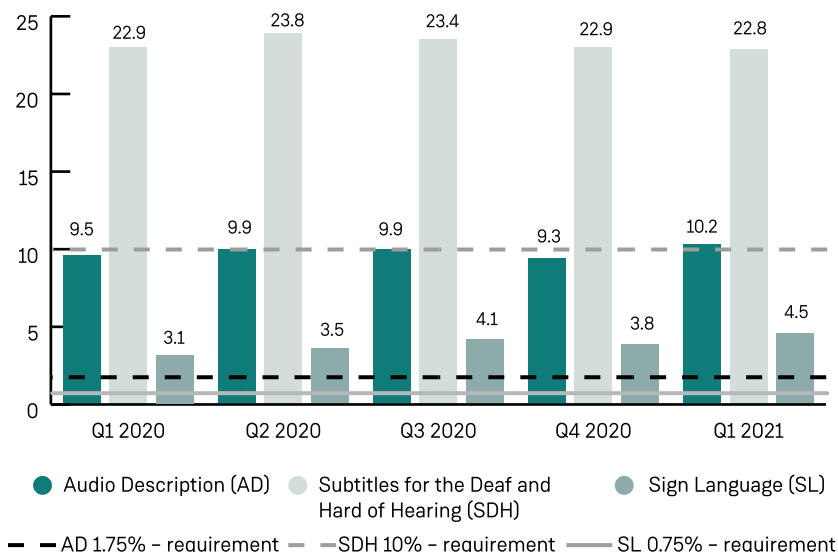


Source: Office of the National Broadcasting Council based on own data

**PERCENTAGE SHARE OF BROADCASTS WITH ACCOMMODATIONS ON
CHANNELS WITH AN AUDIENCE SHARE OF BELOW 1%, BOTH UNIVERSAL
AND WITH A SPECIALISED PROFILE**

This was the largest group featuring 12 universal channels: CANAL+ 4K, CANAL+ Family, CANAL+ PREMIUM (Canal+ until 28 April 2020), METRO, NOWA TV, Polsat 1, POLSAT 2, Polsat Rodzina, Telewizja TVT, TVN INTERNATIONAL, TVN International Extra and TVN International West; and 32 specialised channels: 4FUN KIDS (4FUN GOLD until 15 July 2020), ADVENTURE, CANAL+ SPORT, Canal+ Sport2, Canal+ SPORT3, Canal+ Sport4, Domo+, Fokus TV, HGTV, HOME TV (TVR until 8 July 2020), Kuchnia+, MiniMini+, Nickelodeon Polska, nSport+, PLANETE+, Polsat Cafe, Polsat Games, Polsat News 2, Polsat Play, Polsat Sport, Polsat Sport EXTRA, Polsat Sport Fight, Polsat Sport News, Polsat Sport Premium 1, Polsat Sport Premium 2, Super Polsat, TOP KIDS, TVN STYLE, TVN TURBO, TVP Historia, TVP KULTURA and TVP Rozrywka.

PERCENTAGE SHARE OF BROADCASTS WITH ACCOMMODATIONS ON CHANNELS WITH AN AUDIENCE SHARE OF BELOW 1%, BOTH UNIVERSAL AND WITH A SPECIALISED PROFILE (§8 OF THE REGULATION)



Source: Office of the National Broadcasting Council based on own data

The average share of broadcasts with accommodations in this group of channels significantly exceeded the levels specified in the Regulation. One can easily notice that the average share of the broadcasts met the higher requirements for universal and specialised channels with an audience share above 1%, referred to in §4 of the Regulation.

EXAMPLES OF THE USE OF ACCOMMODATIONS

In addition to quantitative data, let us explore exactly what broadcasts are made accessible to people with a visual or hearing disability using examples of channels distributed through: (1) terrestrial networks, including two universal channels, TVP1 and TVN, the film channel Stopklatka, and the music and entertainment channel ESKA TV; and (2) satellite channels, including the information and current affairs/journalistic channel Polsat News, the sports channel Canal+ Sport, and MiniMini+ addressed to the youngest. Provided below are examples of broadcasts with accommoda-

tions with hourly broadcast distribution times and audience ratings for the corresponding channel.³⁵

TVP1

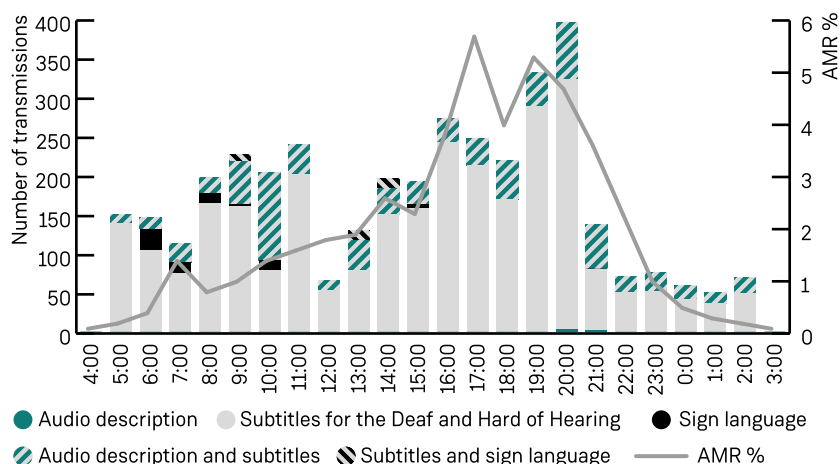
In the first quarter of 2021, the public service broadcaster of TVP1 made the following TV series accessible to people with visual disabilities: *Ojciec Mateusz* [Father Mateusz], *Osiecka*, *Stulecie Winnych* [The Age of the Guilty], *Londyńczycy* [The Londoners], episodes of the reality show *Sanatorium Miłości* [Sanatorium of Love], the documentary series *Wielkie Rodziny* [Great Families] and the nature show *Las bliżej nas* [Forest Closer to Us]. In the evenings, films with audio description were broadcast such as *Nie ma róży bez ognia* [A Jungle Book of Regulations], *Rozmowy kontrolowane* [Calls Controlled] and *Zenek*. People with visual impairments could follow the FIFA World Cup in Qatar. All listed shows also featured Subtitles for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. In addition, audio description was provided for the broadcaster's announcements of the programme/broadcasts as well.

Subtitles for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing were provided for a much larger number of broadcasts. In addition to the ones already listed, subtitles were also available for: news services: *Wiadomości* at 7.30 pm and *Teleexpress*; weather and sports services; TV series: *Blondynka* [The Blonde], *Elif*, *Klan* [Clan], *Komisarz Alex* [Inspector Alex], *Leśniczówka* [Forester's Lodge], *Ranczo* [The Ranch]; films: *Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Squeakquel*, *Stronger*, *U Pana Boga w ogródku* [God's Little Garden], *U Pana Boga za miedzą* [God's Little Village], *U Pana Boga za piecem* [As Snug as a Bug in a Rug], *Sisi*; broadcasts of ski jumping competitions and European Athletics Indoor Championships in Toruń; the documentary series *BBC w Jedynce* [BBC in TVP1]; and the quiz show *Gra słów. Krzyżówka* [Wordplay].

Sign language interpretation was provided for the culinary broadcast *Okrasa łamie przepisy* [Okrasa Reinvents Recipes], the religious show *Słowo na niedzielę* [Word on Sunday], the nature show *Przyrodnik* [Naturalist], the sports show *Pełnosprawni* [Non-Disabled], and during the transmission of Sunday masses.

35 The audience ratings are provided as Average Minute Ratings (AMRs) obtained from Nielsen Audience Measurement's study of a sample of the Polish population over four years of age. AMR is defined as the average percentage of people watching a given channel in one minute.

NUMBER OF TRANSMISSIONS OF BROADCASTS WITH ACCOMMODATIONS ON THE TVP1 CHANNEL IN Q1 2021 – BY THE TIME OF DAY (IN %)



N = 6 129

Source: Office of the National Broadcasting Council based on own data and studies by AGB Nielsen Media Research Sp. z o.o.

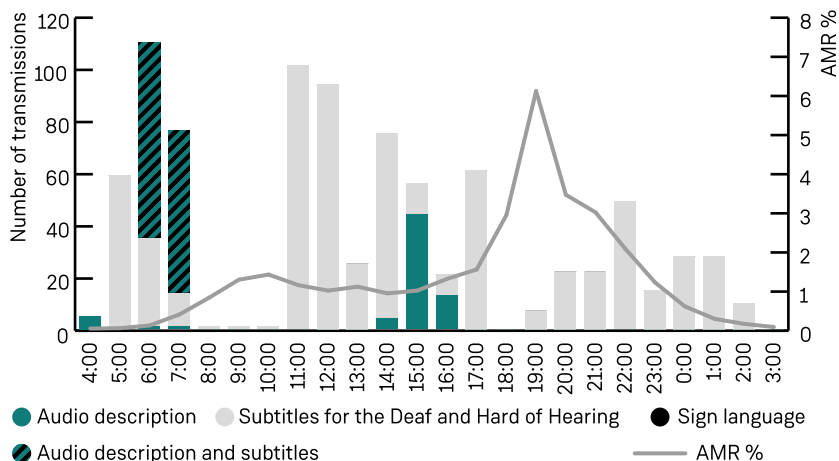
The hourly broadcast distribution times in the chart above show that broadcasts with accommodations were presented throughout the entire day, also at prime time (4 pm to 10 pm). The average AMR for TVP1 reached its maximum at 5 pm and remained high until 10 pm.

TVN

TVN offered accommodations for people with visual disabilities only for one regular show – *Kuchenne rewolucje* [Kitchen Revolutions]. The morning broadcasts of *Kitchen Revolutions* also featured sign language interpretation and were the only TVN's broadcasts that provided this service. However, people with hearing impairments had at their disposal broadcasts with subtitles with different font colours or introduction captions for different characters and with text descriptions of sound effects. Such accommodations were available for the TV series *BrzydUla* [Ugly Ula], the guide series *Nowa Maja w ogrodzie* [New Maja in the Garden], the documentary series *Wyjątkowe domy* [Unique Houses], and two docufiction series: *Szpital* [The Hospital] and *Ukryta prawda* [The Hidden Truth]. In addition, subtitles combining dialogue lines with narration were available

for selected feature films broadcast after 8 pm as well as during the day at weekends and during holidays.

NUMBER OF TRANSMISSIONS OF BROADCASTS WITH ACCOMMODATIONS ON THE TVN CHANNEL IN Q1 2021 – BY THE TIME OF DAY (IN %)



N = 6 129

Source: Office of the National Broadcasting Council based on own data and studies by AGB Nielsen Media Research Sp. z o.o.

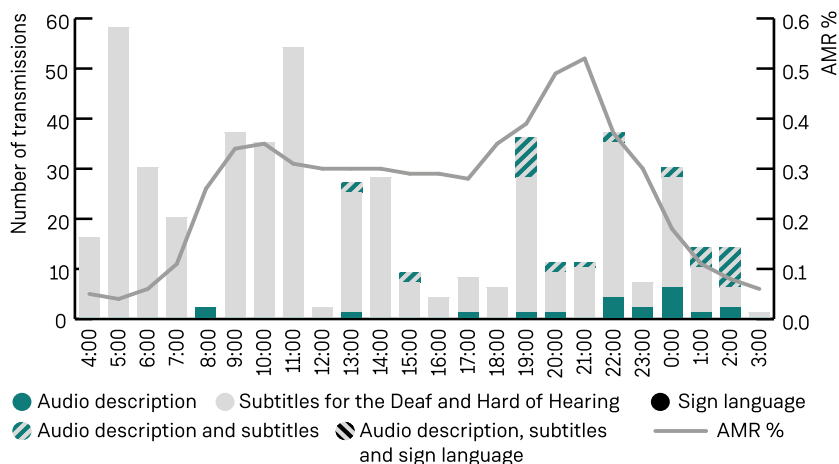
The hourly broadcast distribution times for broadcasts with accommodations on TVN correspond to the fact that audio description and sign language interpretation were provided for only one regular show, and subtitles for films and TV series. The AMR for TVN was the highest at 7 pm.

STOPKLATKA

The accommodations provided in Stopklatka films were primarily subtitles limited to the transcription of dialogues and narration. Only a few films, particularly those broadcast in the evenings, featured audio description. These were Polish film productions such as *Człowiek z marmuru* [Man of Marble], *Dzień świra* [Day of the Wacko], *Kiler* [The Hitman], *Krótki film o miłości* [A Short Film About Love], *Szatan z siódmej klasy* [The Devil from Seventh Grade] and *Zaklęte rewiry* [Enchanted Stations]. Subtitles for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing distinguishing between characters and with a text description of background sounds were available for the crime

series *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries* and *Alles Klara*, and two docuseries: *Misja Afghanistan* [Mission Afghanistan] and *Mayday: Air Disaster*.

NUMBER OF TRANSMISSIONS OF BROADCASTS WITH ACCOMMODATIONS ON THE STOPKLATKA CHANNEL IN Q1 2021 – BY THE TIME OF DAY (IN %)



N = 6 129

Source: Office of the National Broadcasting Council based on own data and studies by AGB Nielsen Media Research Sp. z o.o.

Films with accommodations were available on Stopklatka at all times of the day, with most of them broadcast at 5 am, when the AMR was close to zero. The average AMR for the channel remained stable at slightly above 0.3% between 8 am and 5 pm, increased after 6 pm, and peaked at 9 pm.

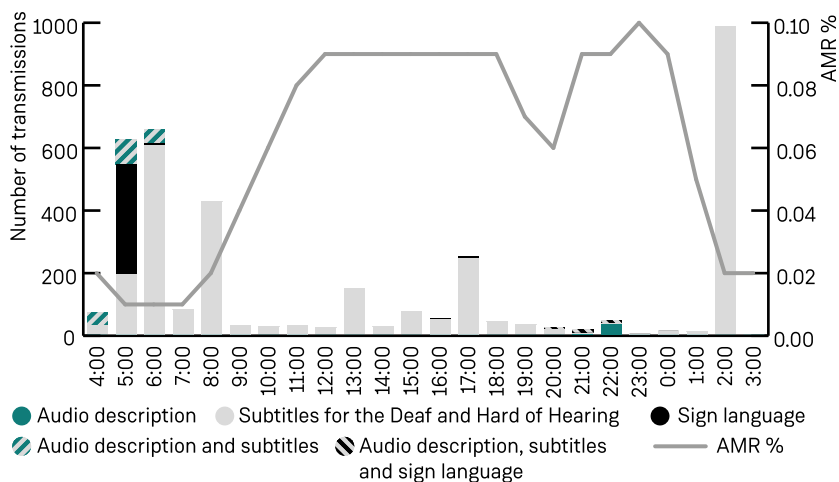
ESKA TV

The offer of Eska TV consists primarily of songs and music videos. Broadcasts with audio description, albeit not required for this type of channels, were presented mainly in the morning. They included the entertainment series *Magicy z ulicy* [Street Magicians] and the docuseries *Polacy za granicą* [Poles Abroad]. These broadcasts also featured Subtitles for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. In the evenings, people with visual disabilities could use audio description for the show *Gry małżeńskie* [The Married Game]. The popular science programme *Pod lupą* [Under the Magnifying Glass] and the said series *Poles Abroad* contained sign language interpretation also not required by law. Subtitles (without a text description of

background sounds) were provided for music videos of Polish songs (e.g. in the show *Polska noc* [Polish Night]).

Broadcasts with accommodations were presented mainly at night and in the early hours of the morning to a negligible percentage of viewers. Higher AMRs for ESKA TV were reported between 10 am and midnight.

NUMBER OF TRANSMISSIONS OF BROADCASTS WITH ACCOMMODATIONS ON THE ESKA TV CHANNEL IN Q1 2021 – BY THE TIME OF DAY (IN %)



N = 6 129

Source: Office of the National Broadcasting Council based on own data and studies by AGB Nielsen Media Research Sp. z o.o.

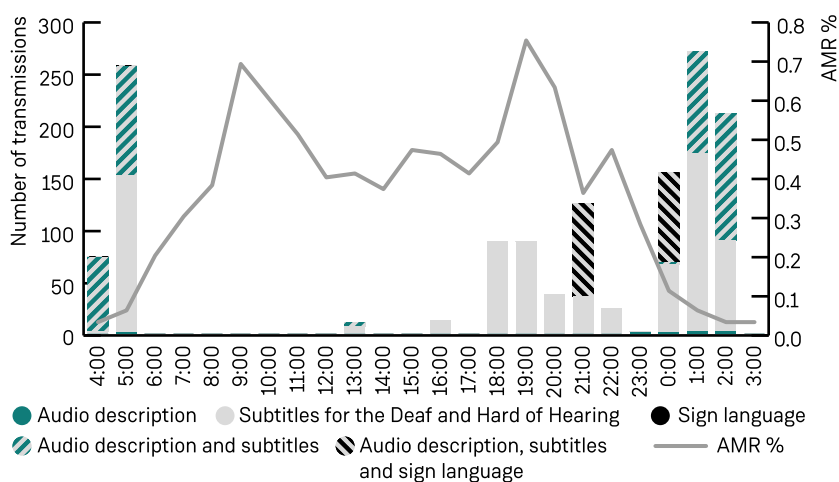
POLSAT NEWS

Among the broadcasts with accommodations for people with visual impairments presented on Polsat News there were cycles dedicated to problems of people with disabilities: *#JesteśmyDlaDzieci* [#WeAreForChildren] and *Superludzie* [Superhumans]; the docuseries: *Łowca pedofilów* [Paedophile Hunter], *Poszukiwacze historii* [History Seekers], *Historia Auschwitz w 33 przedmiotach* [The History of Auschwitz in 33 Objects]; and the entertainment docuseries *Emil, pogromca mandatów* [Emil, the Fine Buster]. All listed broadcasts also featured Subtitles for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Subtitles and sign language interpretation were provided for the evening edition of the news service *Wydarzenia* at 9.50 pm and its replay at night. In addition, subtitles were available for the news service *Wydarzenia* at 6.50 pm, in the current affairs/journalistic talk-shows *Gość Wydarzeń*

[The Guest of the News Service] and *Z klimatem i z pasją* [With Climate and Passion], and in the reporters' show *Interwencja* [Intervention].

Broadcasts with accommodations on Polsat News cumulated at night between midnight and 3 am, and in the morning between 4 am and 6 am, i.e. at the times when the channel has few viewers. Such broadcasts were practically absent during the day, between 6 am and 6 pm, when the AMRs are higher.

NUMBER OF TRANSMISSIONS OF BROADCASTS WITH ACCOMMODATIONS ON THE POLSAT NEWS CHANNEL IN Q1 2021 – BY THE TIME OF DAY (IN %)



N = 6 129

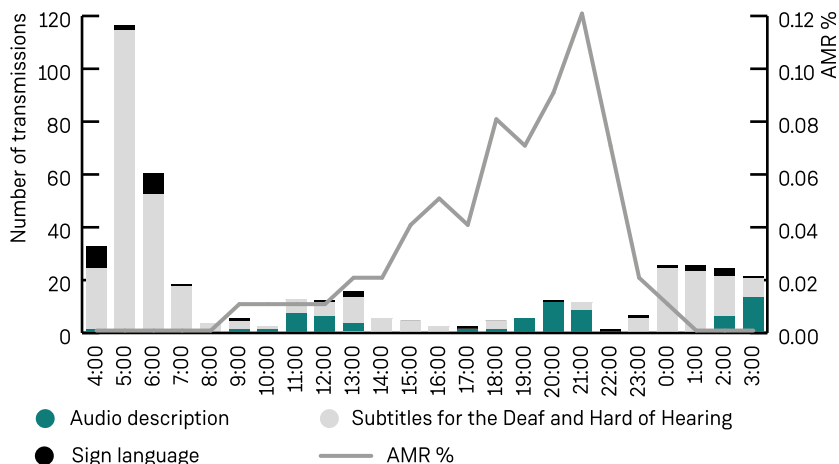
Source: Office of the National Broadcasting Council based on own data and studies by AGB Nielsen Media Research Sp. z o.o.

CANAL+ SPORT

The broadcaster of Canal+ Sport provided audio description for the broadcasts of the Polish football league Ekstraklasa. Subtitles for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing featured in the sports show *Witaj w klubie* [Welcome to the Club], the documentaries *Niebieskie chachary* [The Blue Scallywags] and *Ostatnia góra* [The Last Mountain], and the docuseries *Twardzielki* [Tough Girls]. The documentary *Kajetan Kajetanowicz – noga na gaz* [Kajetan Kajetanowicz: Floor It] and the report *Silk Way 2019: W pogoni za Białym Tygrysem* [Silk Way 2019: In Pursuit of the White Tiger] offered sign language interpretation.

Most broadcasts with accommodations on Canal+ Sport were presented in the early mornings, between 4 am and 8 am, i.e. when the percentage of viewers was close to zero.

NUMBER OF TRANSMISSIONS OF BROADCASTS WITH ACCOMMODATIONS ON THE CANAL+ SPORT CHANNEL IN Q1 2021 – BY THE TIME OF DAY (IN %)



N = 6 129

Source: Office of the National Broadcasting Council based on own data and studies by AGB Nielsen Media Research Sp. z o.o.

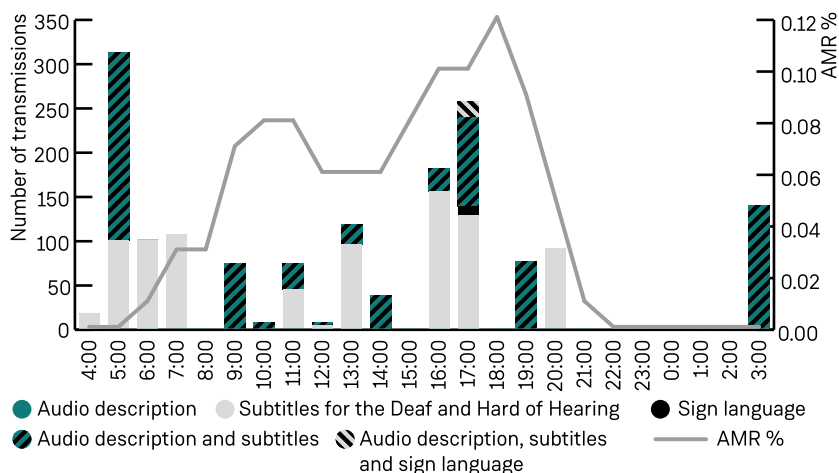
MINIMINI+

MiniMini+ is a channel addressed to the youngest viewers. Some of its cartoons were accessible to children with visual disabilities through audio description, including the series: *Detektyw Łodyga* [Detective Stalk] (aired at 3.45 am), *Super Monsters*, *Dzielny lew Eryk* [Brave Lion Eric], *Księżniczka Hania i Grymasek* [Princess Hania and Little Grimace], *The Ollie & Moon Show*, *Rainbow Rangers*, and the educational programme *Dzieciaki MiniMini Bis* [MiniMini Kids Bis]. The listed shows also featured sign language interpretation. Children with hearing disabilities were also offered cartoons with Subtitles for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in the series: *Bing*, *Where is Wally*, *Monchichi*, *Noddy Toyland Detective*, *The Ollie & Moon Show* and *Wygibajki* [Contorted Tales].

A large part of cartoons with accommodations, particularly those with audio description, were presented in the very early morning hours

to a negligible audience. Their number increased once again during the day, at 5 pm, i.e. at the time with the highest AMRs for this channel (5 pm–6 pm).

NUMBER OF TRANSMISSIONS OF BROADCASTS WITH ACCOMMODATIONS ON THE MINIMINI+ CHANNEL IN Q1 2021 – BY THE TIME OF DAY (IN %)



N = 6 129

Source: Office of the National Broadcasting Council based on own data and studies by AGB Nielsen Media Research Sp. z o.o.

SUMMARY

The Polish legislation introduces some of the most stringent and most elaborate regulations in Europe in terms of ensuring accessibility of the audiovisual offer for persons with a visual or hearing disability.

In parallel, the system provides exemptions for specialised channels and imposes less strict requirements for broadcasters with a low audience share, which prevail on the Polish audiovisual market. The research and analyses conducted by the National Broadcasting Council indicate that people with a visual or hearing disability have, with a few exceptions, access to a much higher share of broadcasts with accommodations than specified in the Regulation of the National Broadcasting Council. Failure to comply with the minimum quotas is rare – in 2020, only 43 such cases were revealed per more than 500 quarterly reports submitted by broadcasters.

However, the examples of broadcasts with accommodations point to an area for improvement on the audiovisual market, as some broadcasters present their shows adapted to the needs of people with a visual or hearing disability at times when audience ratings are low – either late at night or in the early morning hours.

Last but not least, it is worth highlighting that the activity of the National Broadcasting Council related to ensuring the accessibility of the television offer for people with disabilities is not limited to quantitative monitoring to control the implementation of the requirements under article 18a of the Broadcasting Act and the Regulation of the National Broadcasting Council. Acting as the regulatory body, the Council also seeks to improve the quality of accommodations dedicated to such viewers. To this end, we conduct and commission studies to verify the level of accommodations used by broadcasters (including their assessment by persons with disabilities³⁶), analyse research and reports from research and scientific centres³⁷ and, based on this data, prepare opinions and recommendations regarding the quality of accommodations.³⁸

- 36 Studies conducted to verify television broadcasters' compliance with statutory obligations (article 18a of the Broadcasting Act) and ensure the accessibility of programmes for persons with a visual disability through the introduction of audio description, <https://www.gov.pl/web/kririt/analizy-i-monitoringi-problemowe> [accessed: 7 September 2021].
- 37 For example, the report *Niepełnowidzialni. Reprezentacje niepełnosprawności w filmach, serialach i programach TV dla dzieci i młodzieży* [The Dis-Visible. Disability and its representations in films, TV series and TV programmes for children and youth], K. Piróg, W. Jedynak, S. Wilk, A. Kotowska, M. Motyka, M. Pokrzywa, A. Wiktowska-Paleń, University of Rzeszów, funded from the State Fund for the Rehabilitation of Disabled People, Poznań 2021.
- 38 Opinion of the National Broadcasting Council of 30 March 2021 on the quality and implementation method of sign language interpretation in audiovisual materials, <https://www.gov.pl/web/kririt/stanowiska-kririt2> [accessed: 7 September 2021].

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS:

- *Niepełnowidzialni. Reprezentacje niepełnosprawności w filmach, serialach i programach TV dla dzieci i młodzieży* [The Dis-Visible. Disability and its representations in films, TV series and TV programmes for children and youth], K. Piróg, W. Jedynek, S. Wilk, A. Kotowska, M. Motyka, M. Pokrzywa, A. Wiktowska-Paleń, University of Rzeszów, funded from the State Fund for the Rehabilitation of Disabled People, Poznań 2021.
- *Ustawa o radiofonii i telewizji. Komentarz* [The Broadcasting Act. A Commentary], A. Niewęglowski, K. Chałubińska-Jentkiewicz, M. Chrzanowski et al. (Eds), Warsaw 2021.
- *Ustawa o radiofonii i telewizji. Komentarz* [The Broadcasting Act. A Commentary], S. Piątek, W. Dziomdziora, K. Wojciechowski (Eds), Warsaw 2014.

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5.



VARIA

TO GO OR NOT TO GO? READINESS TO RESUME CULTURAL ACTIVITIES AFTER THE EPIDEMIC RESTRICTIONS ARE LIFTED

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The cultural sector is one of the areas of social life where the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has been the most visible. To prevent the spread of the epidemic, unprecedented safety measures have been put in place. From mid-March to early May 2020, regular activities of cultural institutions were suspended; it was virtually impossible to allow audiences to physically gather in one place. It was only later, starting from the beginning of May, that sanitary restrictions were gradually relaxed, and institutions could open to visitors upon compliance with certain preventive measures to minimise health risks. Nevertheless, the operation of cultural institutions was still far from normal: the need for social distancing significantly limited the number of people who could participate in events, and the obligation to take personal protective measures (face masks, hand disinfection) made it impossible to forget about the ongoing epidemic risk. Although we could finally go to the cinema, theatre, museum and art gallery, these visits differed from what we remembered from before the pandemic.

In this context, an interesting research problem is to analyse motives that encouraged Poles to participate in cultural events or made them refrain from engaging in this type of activity. In early June 2020, the National Centre for Culture conducted a survey to explore this topic.¹ This article

1 The preliminary discussion of the survey results is presented in: *Gotowość do podjęcia aktywności kulturalnej po zniesieniu ograniczeń epidemicznych*.

is based on its results and analyses Poles' readiness to return to cultural institutions after the lifting of the principal epidemic restrictions. It was our assumption that this decision required weighing, on the one hand, one's willingness to participate in cultural events and, on the other, the perceived risk related to it in the face of the current health crisis. We were particularly interested in what determined the respondents' choice in this regard: Which groups of respondents were willing to resume cultural activities offered by cultural institutions immediately after the restrictions were lifted? Who preferred to wait longer?

To answer these questions, we first describe people's readiness to resume cultural activities after the period of the first pandemic restrictions based on our survey. We proceed to discuss three types of factors that may affect people's willingness to participate in cultural events: demographic variables, personal cultural preferences and the attitude to obligatory preventive measures. The decision tree technique, Chi-square Automatic Interaction Detection (CHAID), is used to indicate the most differentiating variables. Finally, we propose an interpretation of the ambiguous role of the applicable sanitary measures, which – paradoxically – appear to discourage part of the potential audiences from direct participation in cultural events.

Returning to participation in institutionalised forms of culture proved a particularly interesting issue in the context of the lifting of epidemic restrictions. Unlike work, shopping or, in the case of believers, participation in religious practices, participation in culture is not a strictly necessary activity and can therefore serve as a good indicator of 'things going back to normal'. It can be suspected that the willingness to participate in cultural events is linked to an acceptable level of risk in other spheres as

Komunikat z badania Narodowego Centrum Kultury [Readiness to resume cultural activities after the epidemic restrictions are lifted. Survey Report], National Centre for Culture, Warsaw 2020. The report is available at: <https://nck.pl/badania/aktualnosci/549813554> [accessed: 13 September 2021].
The survey was repeated in December 2020. Its results can be found in *Gotowość do podjęcia aktywności kulturalnej po zniesieniu ograniczeń epidemicznych (grudzień 2020). Komunikat z badania Narodowego Centrum Kultury [Readiness to resume cultural activities after the epidemic restrictions are lifted (December 2020). Survey Report], National Centre for Culture, Warsaw 2021. The report is available at: <https://www.nck.pl/badania/aktualnosci/kultura-po-epidemii-infografika> [accessed: 16 August 2021].*

well. As a result, our analysis could be a contribution to a study of how people return to ordinary life in the situation of a prolonged health crisis.

The survey, the results of which are presented below, was conducted between 1 and 8 June 2020 on behalf of the National Centre for Culture by IQS using the Computer Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI) method on a quota sample of 1 000 respondents representative of all Poles in terms of gender, age (six categories), education (three categories), the population size of the place of residence (four categories) and voivodeship. The sample was constructed based on distributions of demographic characteristics in the databases of Statistics Poland. The distributions of the four listed characteristics were optimised for pairs to ensure that the distribution in each pair of variables was as close as possible to the data of Statistics Poland. Once the survey was completed, the interviews were weighted using the marginal weighting method to obtain marginal distributions as close as possible to those known for the population (weighting according to age, education, the size of the place of residence and voivodeship was applied).

It should be emphasised that the results discussed below refer to the situation between spring and summer 2020. The development of the epidemic after that period, including further restrictions introduced in autumn 2020 in connection with the second wave of the coronavirus pandemic, is not included in the following discussion.

BACKGROUND: THE SITUATION OF THE CULTURAL SECTOR AT THE BEGINNING OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC²

The state of epidemic was officially introduced in Poland on 20 March 2020 – approximately two weeks after the first case of COVID-19 was recorded. However, epidemic safety measures had been introduced before. Pursuant to the decision of the Government Crisis Management Team, the operation of cultural institutions, philharmonic halls, operas, operettas, theatres, muse-

- 2 A more elaborate discussion of the results of social studies and expert reports on the situation of the cultural sector during the COVID-19 pandemic is presented in the Polish Culture Yearbook 2020, to which this article also refers.

ums, cinemas, community centres, libraries and art galleries was suspended from 12 March 2020. Given that all mass events were also cancelled, participation in institutional cultural life became virtually impossible.

From 24 March onwards, the health and safety recommendations in Poland were tightened. Gatherings of more than two people were banned and the movement of people was restricted. Restrictions also applied to religious ceremonies and public transport. On 31 March, further measures were introduced: selected public places and service points were closed to the public, customer limits were implemented in shops, and minors could not leave the house without adult supervision.

Studies show that some respondents resigned from participation in cultural events already at the beginning of March.³ According to the Public Opinion Research Centre (CBOS), the need to give up access to cultural institutions ranked low on the list of the most difficult pandemic restrictions (it was indicated by only 16% of respondents).⁴ Respondents considered the following restrictions as more severe: the need to stay at home, the ban on access to forests and parks, the need to cover the mouth and nose, restricted access to basic services such as hairdressers or beauticians, and the lockdown of restaurants and bars. Some respondents were able to replace participation in cultural events with activities organised individually in their own homes. Respondents in the CBOS survey declared that they dedicated extra free time to cultural activities such as watching films (30%), reading books (22%) and own hobbies (18%). A study conducted by Kantar reveals an increase in online activity (including the use of streaming services⁵) and watching television⁶ already at the beginning of the

3 See: *Wpływ epidemii koronawirusa na życie Polaków* [Impact of the coronavirus epidemic on the life of Poles], Kantar, 2020.

4 *Życie codzienne w czasach zarazy* [Everyday life in the time of the pandemic], Public Opinion Research Centre (CBOS), 2020.

5 Interesting in this context is the case of music consumption via streaming services, which seems to have declined during the epidemic period as opposed to video content, as indicated, for example, by data published by Spotify in the financial report for the first quarter of 2020 (available at: <https://investors.spotify.com/financials> [accessed: 15 July 2020]). This observation can serve as an interesting contribution to sociological reflection on contemporary practices of music and its reception.

6 *Wpływ epidemii koronawirusa na życie Polaków* [Impact of the coronavirus epidemic on the life of Poles], Kantar, 2020.

epidemic. As observed by researchers from Adam Mickiewicz University, in the situation of the pandemic, individual cultural activity could be of an escapist nature⁷, while larger than usual amounts of free time could in the long term cause psychological issues as a result of a disrupted lifestyle causing the need to invest more effort into planning one's time.⁸

The lifting of the restrictions began in early May. Libraries and selected cultural institutions were the first to resume their activity (4 May), followed by restaurants and bars (13 May), playing fields and outdoor cinemas (18 May), and eventually cinemas, theatres and sports facilities (3 June). Gatherings of up to 150 people were once again allowed.

THE DEFINITION OF 'PARTICIPATION IN CULTURE'

Our survey focused on participation in cultural life during the gradual lifting of epidemic restrictions, i.e. when the operation of institutions was restored, but one could hardly speak of a return to normality. We decided to concentrate on paid cultural activities with physically present audiences. As a result, the definition of 'participation in culture' adopted throughout the study was similar to how the term is traditionally viewed – as an activity of cultural institutions whose users are passive recipients of the cultural offer. This model may be considered anachronistic. Current studies of cultural activity tend to adopt the 'extended' or even 'post-extended' concept of cultural participation⁹, where the scope of activities recognised as belonging to the sphere of culture is much broader. This concept puts

7 R. Drozdowski, M. Frąckowiak, M. Krajewski et al., *Życie codzienne w czasach pandemii. Raport z drugiego etapu badań. Wersja skrócona* [Everyday life in the time of the pandemic. Report from the second stage of research. Abridged version], Poznań 2020, p. 140.

8 Ibid., p. 19.

9 T. Szlendak, W. Goszczyński, M. Krajewska, *Praktyki pozametropolitalne: uczestnictwo w kulturze w małym i średnim mieście* [Extrametropolitan practices: Participation in culture in small and medium-sized towns], 'Studia Socjologiczne' 2019, No. 2(233); A. Bachórz, K. Stachura, *W poszukiwaniu punktów stycznych. Rekonstrukcja dyskursu o problemach nieuczestnictwa w kulturze* [In search of points of contact. Reconstruction of a discourse on non-participation in culture], Instytut Kultury Miejskiej/City Culture Institute, Gdańsk 2015, pp. 33–41.

emphasis on individual agency, deinstitutionalisation, the arbitrary valuation of activities recognised as the classically defined canon of ‘high’ culture, and the continuous expansion of the field of culture to include new types of activities (both the newly established ones and those newly incorporated into the field of culture).¹⁰ This understanding of culture prevents the repetition of traditional mistakes in the statistical approach to the cultural sector.¹¹

However, this does not mean that research focused on cultural institutions has lost its *raison d'être*.¹² While not denying the general validity of reservations raised with respect to the traditional understanding of participation in culture, we decided that identifying a study of participation in institutionalised cultural practices as a research objective was justified as it was precisely this type of activity that was drastically reduced due to the pandemic – much more than other types of cultural practices. Focusing on activities of higher risk, access to which was much more limited during the epidemic, seemed to be a natural research approach. It is worth highlighting that our survey covered cultural practices traditionally clas-

- 10 M. Krajewski, ‘Ja poszerzam’, ‘Ty poszerzasz’... *Poszerzanie pola kultury i wynikające stąd nieporozumienia* [‘I expand’, ‘You expand’... Expansion of the field of culture and the resulting misunderstandings], [in:] *Pomorskie poszerzenie pola kultury. Dylematy – konteksty – działania* [The expansion of the field of culture in Pomorskie. Dilemmas – contexts – actions], C. Obracht-Prondzyński, P. Zbieranek (Eds), Gdańsk 2017; R. Wisniewski, T. Kukołowicz, *Pięć kierunków poszerzania pola kultury, czyli uwagi o współczesnej polityce kulturalnej* [Five directions of expanding the field of culture, or notes on contemporary cultural policy], [in:] *Pomorskie poszerzenie pola kultury*, op. cit.; A. Bachórz, K. Ciechorska-Kulesza, S. Czarnecki et al., *Punkty styeczne: między kulturą a praktyką (nie)uczestnictwa* [Points of contact: Between culture and the practice of (non-)participation], Instytut Kultury Miejskiej/City Culture Institute, Gdańsk 2014.
- 11 B. Fatyga, *Rekonstrukcja sensu kategorii uczestnictwa w kulturze* [Reconstruction of the meaning of the category of participation in culture], [in:] *Praktyki kulturalne Polaków* [Cultural practices of Poles], R. Drozdowski, B. Fatyga, M. Filiciak (Eds), Toruń 2014.
- 12 G. Pol, Z. Maciejczak-Kwiatkowska, *Kogo nie interesuje kultura (instytucjonalna)? Segmentacja uczestników kultury* [Who is not interested in (institutional) culture? The segmentation of cultural participants], ‘Zarządzanie w Kulturze’ 2019, No. 4(20).

sified as both 'high' and 'low' culture, exploring opera as well as popular music concerts.

Moreover, this article is not intended to present a comprehensive view of Poles' participation in cultural life in the discussed period. For this to be possible, a much more extensive study would have to be conducted which would consider changes in culture consumption models during lockdowns. In this context, the growing importance of the individual consumption of cultural content online emerges as a key issue. Both research¹³ and statistical data published by Internet content providers¹⁴ point to the increasing importance of this form of contact with culture. Naturally, the question about the significance of this trend for long-term changes in cultural participation remains open. In view of the above, when analysing the data presented below, one should bear in mind that its purpose is to characterise only one aspect of the situation.

RESULTS

PARTICIPATION IN CULTURAL ACTIVITIES IN 2019

Since we were interested in the return of respondents to cultural activities, it was first necessary to identify people that are otherwise regular users of cultural institutions and their paid offer. To this end, we asked a question about activities in 2019. Of all cultural practices listed in the questionnaire, going to the cinema ranked the highest (64% of respondents had done it at least once) and was followed by visiting historical sites (56%), visiting museums (46%), going to festivals or popular music concerts (44%), and visiting cultural centres and establishments and centres of culture (42%). The least popular cultural practices included going to the opera or philharmonic hall (18%) and classical music concerts (19%).

Respondents regularly participating in cultural events were defined as those who took part in at least one of the listed activities more than once every six months. As a result, 58% of all respondents (N = 583) were included in this group. It formed the basis for further analysis.

13 *Covid-19 Monitor. Wave 1 results for Poland and the key markets around the world*, Kantar, 2020.

14 For example, financial data from the first quarter of 2020 published by Netflix shows a considerable increase in the number of users (available at: <https://www.netflixinvestor.com/financials/quarterly-earnings/default.aspx> [accessed: 15 July 2020]).

PARTICIPATION IN CULTURAL ACTIVITIES IN 2019 AMONG ALL RESPONDENTS (IN %)

IN 2019, DID YOU GO TO/VISIT (...)?	NEVER	LESS THAN ONCE EVERY SIX MONTHS	ONCE EVERY SIX MONTHS	ONCE EVERY 2-3 MONTHS	ONCE A MONTH	SEVERAL TIMES A MONTH	ONCE A WEEK OR MORE OFTEN
- the cinema	36	8	17	23	11	5	1
- a classical music concert	81	8	7	3	1	1	0
- an art gallery	76	10	8	4	1	0	0
- a museum	54	17	18	8	2	1	0
- the theatre	68	11	12	8	1	1	0
- a historical site	44	16	20	13	4	1	1
- a cultural centre/cultural establishment/centre of culture	58	8	14	11	4	2	2
- the opera or philharmonic hall	82	8	6	3	1	0	0
- a concert or a festival of music other than classical music	56	13	15	13	2	0	0

N = 1 000

Source: National Centre for Culture/IQS (2020)

PARTICIPATION IN CULTURAL ACTIVITIES AMONG RESPONDENTS REGULARLY TAKING PART IN SUCH ACTIVITIES (IN %)

IN 2019, DID YOU GO TO/VISIT (...)?	NEVER	LESS THAN ONCE EVERY SIX MONTHS	ONCE EVERY SIX MONTHS	ONCE EVERY 2-3 MONTHS	ONCE A MONTH	SEVERAL TIMES A MONTH	ONCE A WEEK OR MORE OFTEN
- the cinema	15	5	12	40	19	8	1
- a classical music concert	71	12	10	5	2	1	0
- an art gallery	64	14	12	7	2	1	1
- a museum	38	19	25	14	3	1	0
- the theatre	50	15	18	13	2	1	0

IN 2019, DID YOU GO TO/VISIT (...)?	NEVER	LESS THAN ONCE EVERY SIX MONTHS	ONCE EVERY SIX MONTHS	ONCE EVERY 2-3 MONTHS	ONCE A MONTH	SEVERAL TIMES A MONTH	ONCE A WEEK OR MORE OFTEN
- a historical site	25	16	25	23	7	2	2
- a cultural centre/cultural establishment/centre of culture	44	9	15	19	7	3	3
- the opera or philharmonic hall	73	11	9	5	2	1	0
- a concert or a festival of music other than classical music	38	14	21	22	3	1	0

N = 583

Source: National Centre for Culture/IQS (2020)

READINESS TO RESUME CULTURAL ACTIVITIES AFTER THE LIFTING OF THE RESTRICTIONS

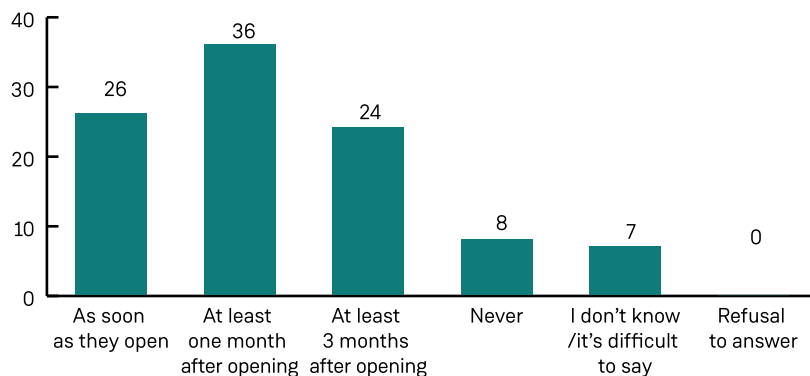
Approximately one quarter (26%) of respondents regularly participating in cultural events declared that they were willing to return to this activity immediately after the opening of cultural institutions. The percentage of those who preferred to wait at least one month was the highest (36%), 24% declared that they would perhaps return only after three months, while 8% did not intend to return at all.

Given that our objective was to characterise groups of respondents ready to resume cultural activities at given times, the 'it's difficult to say' category, selected by 7% of respondents, was excluded from detailed analyses.

Understandably, the willingness to return to cultural institutions is related to the perceived lack of access to this type of activity. The respondents who missed live events during the epidemic were more likely to attend them immediately after the opening of cultural institutions or after one month, while those who did not preferred to wait at least three months or did not plan to return to cultural institutions at all.¹⁵

15 All calculations were performed in IBM SPSS. Regarding the differences between the categories, we used the proportion test (z-test) with multiple comparison correction (the Bonferroni test). All differences discussed in the text were significant at $p < 0.05$.

HOW SOON AFTER THE OPENING OF CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO TAKE PART IN A PAID CULTURAL EVENT? (IN %)



N = 583

Source: National Centre for Culture/IQS (2020)

READINESS TO RETURN TO CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS AND THE PERCEIVED LACK OF CULTURAL ACTIVITY DURING THE PANDEMIC (IN %)

HOW SOON AFTER THE OPENING OF CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO TAKE PART IN A PAID CULTURAL EVENT?	DO YOU CURRENTLY MISS PARTICIPATING IN LIVE EVENTS AT CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS DUE TO THE EPIDEMIC?		
	YES	NO	I DON'T KNOW/IT'S DIFFICULT TO SAY
As soon as they open	33	17	4
At least one month after opening	42	27	63
At least 3 months after opening	21	35	33
Never	4	21	0

Source: National Centre for Culture/IQS (2020)

This regularity, while intuitively understandable, does not in itself say much about people willing to resume cultural activities. Naturally, their subjective experience of the lack of access to cultural institutions probably translated into a significant motivation to take the risk and participate in events. However, to better describe this group, a more in-depth analysis with a larger number of variables is necessary.

FACTORS INFLUENCING USERS' READINESS TO RETURN TO CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

We assumed that the readiness to return to cultural institutions could be influenced by three types of factors. First, the socio-demographic variables such as education, the size of the place of residence, gender and age of respondents are traditionally considered as shaping people's interest in cultural activity.¹⁶ Their impact could also be significant in our study: the willingness to return to cultural events would therefore be linked to a general interest in this sphere of life. Second, respondents' personal cultural preferences were taken into account. People regularly attending certain types of events could be more willing to return to them faster than those who preferred other types of activities. Third, sanitary measures – obligatory face masks, body temperature measurement, social distancing, the provision of personal data, restricted access to restaurants, bars and other points of sale, and the limited offer of cultural institutions – introduced by cultural institutions to prevent the spread of the virus constituted another group of factors to consider.

The latter hypothesis is supported by the preliminary results of research from other countries in that period. While actual comparisons are difficult due to differences in research tools and methods, certain general trends can be identified. Data obtained in surveys conducted in the United States¹⁷ and the United Kingdom¹⁸ indicate that the introduction of a stricter sanitary regime could encourage the return of audiences to cultural institutions. However, these results are not entirely conclusive. For example, a report published by Indigo shows that while measures such as a reduced number of tickets sold, access to disinfectants and social distancing could have a positive impact on people's willingness to participate in a cultural event, the need to wear masks could have the opposite – discouraging – effect.

16 See: T. Szlendak, *Formy aktywności kulturalnej* [Forms of cultural activity], [in:] *Praktyki kulturalne Polaków* [Cultural practices of Poles], R. Drozdowski, B. Fatyga, M. Filiciak (Eds), Toruń 2014.

17 *Culture + community in a time of crisis*, LaPlaca Cohen, Slover Linett Audience Research, 2020.

18 *Audience views on returning to live cultural events, booking tickets now and in the future, and missing out on events during lockdown*, Indigo, 2020; *Covid 19: Public intentions on returning as audience members*, Creative Scotland, 56 Degree Insight, 2020.

Out of the socio-demographic variables considered in the study (gender, age, education, size of the place of residence), age¹⁹ and education²⁰ were found to have an effect, with the youngest respondents (aged 18–24) being more likely to resume cultural activities than the older ones, as well as respondents with secondary or higher education rather than those with primary education. No statistically significant differences were found for gender and the size of the place of residence.

READINESS TO RETURN TO CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS AND RESPONDENTS' AGE AND EDUCATION (IN %)

HOW SOON AFTER THE OPENING OF CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO TAKE PART IN A PAID CULTURAL EVENT?	AGE						LEVEL OF EDUCATION		
	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	OVER 65 YEARS OLD	PRIMARY, VOCATIONAL	SECONDARY	HIGHER
As soon as they open	48	27	25	29	18	28	18	30	33
At least one month after opening	31	37	41	44	46	30	45	37	35
At least 3 months after opening	12	30	27	23	25	29	25	24	27
Never	9	6	7	4	11	13	11	9	5

Source: National Centre for Culture/IQS (2020)

The impact of preferred activities on the readiness to return turned out to be relatively small, albeit noticeable for the cinema, art gallery, museum and theatre.²¹ Respondents who otherwise visited these institutions at least once every six months were more likely to return to participation in events immediately after the restrictions were lifted. No statistically significant differences were observed for other cultural practices analysed in the study.

19 The chi-square test result for readiness to resume cultural activities and age was 28.897 (df = 15, $p < 0.05$).

20 The chi-square test result for readiness to resume cultural activities and education was 13.982 (df = 6, $p < 0.05$).

21 The chi-square test result for readiness to resume cultural activities and going to the cinema, art gallery, museum and theatre at least once every six months were, respectively: 11.330; 8.779; 7.993; 15.196 (in all cases df = 3, $p < 0.05$).

READINESS TO RETURN TO CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN IN 2019 (IN %)

HOW SOON AFTER THE OPENING OF CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO TAKE PART IN A PAID CULTURAL EVENT?	DECLARED GOING TO THE [...] MORE THAN ONCE EVERY SIX MONTHS							
	CINEMA		ART GALLERY		MUSEUM		THEATRE	
	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES
As soon as they open	21	32	26	45	26	37	25	44
At least one month after opening	37	39	39	29	38	39	40	28
At least 3 months after opening	30	23	26	17	27	17	26	24
Never	12	6	8	10	9	6	9	4

Data Source Provider: NCK/IQS (2020)

The last group of factors considered in the study were the preventive measures introduced by cultural institutions. Respondents were asked whether the implementation of such measures had a positive, negative or neutral effect on their willingness to visit cultural institutions. Our analysis shows that the application of all measures, with the exclusion of the obligatory provision of personal data, was positively correlated with people's readiness to return to cultural institutions.²² Surprisingly, however, the respondents whose evaluation of the implemented preventive measures was negative were willing to return to cultural activities faster. This relationship was most evident in the case of the need to wear face masks: the respondents who declared a positive impact of this obligation on their willingness to attend a cultural institution were inclined to wait longer than those whose opinion of face masks was negative. Similar regularities were observed for other variables. This may suggest that preventive measures do not reduce the feeling

- 22 The chi-square test result for readiness to resume cultural activities and the assessment of obligatory face masks, body temperature measurement, social distancing, restricted access to restaurants, bars and other points of sale, and the limited offer of cultural institutions were, respectively: 57.142; 31.938; 29.406; 13.467; 24.971 ($p < 0.05$). For all variables $df = 6$. The chi-square test result for readiness to resume cultural activities and the assessment of the obligation to provide personal data was 3.817 (this result did not allow us to reject the hypothesis of the independence of variables at the assumed level of significance). Due to low frequency in the sample, the answers 'it is difficult to say' were excluded from the analysis.

of fear in the respondents who are afraid to return (or reduce it to a degree that is not sufficient to make them decide to return) to cultural institutions.

READINESS TO RETURN TO CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS AND THE ATTITUDE TO MEASURES TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF THE VIRUS (IN %)

WHAT IS THE EFFECT OF THE FOLLOWING FACTORS ON YOUR WILLINGNESS TO VISIT A CULTURAL INSTITUTION?		HOW SOON AFTER THE OPENING OF CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO TAKE PART IN A PAID CULTURAL EVENT?			
		AS SOON AS THEY OPEN	AT LEAST ONE MONTH AFTER OPENING	AT LEAST 3 MONTHS AFTER OPENING	NEVER
- obligatory face mask during the visit	Positive	16	34	39	11
	Neutral	23	40	31	6
	Negative	42	39	12	6
- obligatory body temperature measurement	Positive	20	38	30	12
	Neutral	33	41	23	3
	Negative	42	37	11	10
- obligatory social distancing	Positive	20	38	31	11
	Neutral	28	44	24	4
	Negative	43	33	17	8
- obligatory provision of personal data and consent to their processing	Positive	26	44	19	10
	Neutral	28	36	30	6
	Negative	29	39	25	7
- restricted access to restaurants, bars and other points of sale	Positive	25	32	32	11
	Neutral	26	41	28	5
	Negative	34	39	18	9
- limited cultural offer	Positive	26	24	36	15
	Neutral	25	42	28	5
	Negative	34	43	17	6

Source: National Centre for Culture/IQS (2020)

These results may suggest that the willingness to promptly return to cultural institutions in combination with a negative opinion about the preventive measures are components of the same attitude characterised by a greater propensity to take risks. Given that particularly the youngest respondents want to quickly return to cultural institutions, it may be assumed that they assess the danger of infection or the resulting disease as relatively low.

To verify which factors could allow us to best predict respondents' attitude to the return to cultural institutions, an analysis using the CHAID decision tree was used. This method aims to identify the variables that most strongly differentiate the values of the dependent variable and divide the subjects into groups that are maximally different from each other. The resulting decision tree illustrates the subsequent respondent splitting stages. The final groups that emerge from the analysis form the lowest level of the tree.

Our analysis confirmed the significant role of the evaluation of the applied protective measures. The highest predictive value (46% correct qualification) was achieved by creating a two-level tree taking into account the respondents' attitude to obligatory face masks and the limited offer of cultural institutions. It is worth emphasising that the introduction of the most differentiating demographic variable (age) or even the subjective assessment of the infection risk into the model did not increase the accuracy of prediction.

As a result of the CHAID analysis, respondents were divided into four groups. Those who had a positive opinion on the limited cultural offer (or who had no opinion on this subject) as well as a positive or neutral attitude towards wearing masks (or selected the answer 'I don't know/it's difficult to say'; belonging to node 3) were more likely not to return to cultural institutions sooner than three months after their opening. Therefore, these persons turned out to be the most cautious, assessing the risk of participation in cultural events the highest. Respondents who had a positive or neutral attitude to wearing face masks, but whose assessment of the offer limitation was negative or neutral (node 4), were the most willing to return to cultural institutions earlier than others – after at least one month.

Respondents who were negative about the obligation to wear face masks (node 2) were more likely to return to participation in cultural events immediately after the opening of cultural institutions – their level of caution was therefore lower. It is interesting to analyse the next splits in this group. Respondents who assessed the limitation of institutions' offer positively and negatively were assigned to the same node (5) – they were less likely to quickly return to cultural institutions than respondents declaring a neutral attitude to offer limitation (node 6). It can be suggested that this is the effect of two types of motivations: caution in the case of respondents whose assessment of offer limitation was positive, and reduced interest in the limited cultural offer in the case of those whose attitude towards this measure was negative.

THE CHAID DECISION TREE MODEL

Q04. How soon after the opening of cultural institutions would you be willing to take part in a paid cultural event?

Node 0		
Category	%	n
As soon as they open	27.3	127
At least one month after opening	39.7	185
At least 3 months after opening	24.0	112
Never	9.0	42
Total	100.0	466

Q07. What is the effect of the following factors on your willingness to visit a cultural institution? - obligatory face mask during the visit
Adjusted P value = 0.000, Chi-square = 59.819, df = 3

positive; neutral; I don't know/it's difficult to say

Node 1		
Category	%	n
As soon as they open	15.6	43
At least one month after opening	40.4	111
At least 3 months after opening	33.5	92
Never	10.5	29
Total	59.0	275

negative

Node 2		
Category	%	n
As soon as they open	44.0	84
At least one month after opening	38.7	74
At least 3 months after opening	10.5	20
Never	6.8	13
Total	41.0	191

Q07. What is the effect of the following factors on your willingness to visit a cultural institution? - limited cultural offer
Adjusted P value = 0.000, Chi-square = 24.343, df = 3

positive; neutral; I don't know/it's difficult to say

Node 3		
Category	%	n
As soon as they open	21.6	19
At least one month after opening	20.5	18
At least 3 months after opening	39.8	35
Never	18.2	16
Total	19.9	88

negative

Node 4		
Category	%	n
As soon as they open	12.8	24
At least one month after opening	49.7	93
At least 3 months after opening	30.5	57
Never	7.0	13
Total	40.1	187

positive; neutral; I don't know/it's difficult to say

Node 5		
Category	%	n
As soon as they open	41.0	57
At least one month after opening	43.2	60
At least 3 months after opening	6.5	9
Never	9.4	13
Total	29.8	139

negative

	%	n
		27
		14
	2	11
	0	0
Total	1	52

SUMMARY

The results of the survey show that the youngest respondents and those whose assessment of most preventive measures introduced to reduce the health risk was negative are also the most likely to return to cultural institutions in the first period after their opening. Naturally, the experience of the lack of access to cultural events during the lockdowns also plays a significant role.

Based on this analysis, it could be suggested that the introduction of preventive measures contributes only to a limited degree to increasing the sense of safety among audiences of cultural events in the early period after the opening of cultural institutions. More cautious respondents, for whom the effectiveness of preventive measures is important, prefer to wait a few months before returning to this type of activities. In contrast, for those less cautious, the discomfort of compliance with restrictions can outweigh the benefits of reduced risk – as their subjective assessment of the latter is low anyway. In this case, it is probably important to remember that audiences of cultural events consist primarily of young people who are generally less afraid of a coronavirus infection.

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