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Recommendations of ICOMOS Spain –International Council of Monuments and Sites– concerning the reopening of cultural assets, museums and heritage centres and their adaptation to what has been called the "new normality" against Covid-19

On 28 April, the Council of Ministers of the Government of Spain approved the Plan for the Transition towards a New Normality after the crisis caused by COVID-19 that establishes the main parameters and instruments and the calendar of phases of the de-escalation that foresees in the first phase the opening of museums and in the second cultural assets and heritage centres with maximum security guarantees.

The planned dates for the museums correspond to phase 1, which is activated on May 11. The monuments and heritage sites will be incorporated in phase 2 that is activated from May 27 to June 7. There is a differential de-escalation for the islands of El Hierro, Formentera, La Gomera and La Graciosa that start phase 1 on May 4. In relation to the public visit of museums and heritage centres, access control and load capacity are required, with a reduction of a capacity of one third or less depending on compliance with the personal safety distance.

From **ICOMOS Spain, the national committee of the International Council of Monuments and Sites**, before starting the reopening of cultural assets, museums and heritage centres, it is recommended that health security can be guaranteed for the people who work in them and for their public, as well as the own conservation of cultural assets. That is why seven basic recommendations are proposed:

- **Required immersion in sanitary culture measures as a step prior to opening, for all personnel of cultural assets, museums and heritage centres.** It is necessary to have specific information material (e.g. graphic material as developed by the German Ministry of Culture), design an online training / information program for staff before returning to their jobs, create an information channel with usefulness data for focal points at each site to optimize actions and guarantee processes more effectively and efficiently, as well a contact for questions and queries.
- **Incorporate the recommendations of the Institute of Cultural Heritage of Spain - IPCE of the Ministry of Culture and Sports on disinfection procedures in cultural assets on the occasion of COVID-19.** ICOMOS has carried out a follow-up and informative contact against the existing risk due to ignorance of the harmful effects of fumigations, especially in historic centres and rural areas. In this regard, several complaints have been received, stating that water solutions with bleach or chlorine incompatible with heritage conservation were used. Several autonomous communities have adopted specific complementary measures in this regard, such as Castilla-León, Catalunya or Murcia. ICOMOS has suggested that these actions be implemented through the National Risk and Emergency Management Plan promoted by the Spanish Cultural Heritage Institute of the Ministry of Culture and Sports, with the support of the Spain Blue Shield. The national committee of this international organization is integrated by our entity - which chairs it in this period 2020-23 – with other entities as the Centre for Studies of International Humanitarian Law of the Spanish Red Cross, the General Directorate of Civil Protection and Emergencies and the Directorate General of the Civil Guard of the Ministry of the Interior, the Spanish Federation of Archival, Library, Library, Documentation and Museum Societies - FESABID, ICOM Spain -

Spanish Committee of the International Council of Museums, and the Spanish Cultural Heritage Institute - IPCE, the General Subdirectorate of State Archives and General Sub-Directorate for the Protection of Historical Heritage of the Ministry of Culture and Sports.

- **Adapt and implement the protocols for measures to reduce sanitary and hygienic risks against Covid-19 in cultural assets, museums and heritage equipment.** ICOMOS Spain is working in two of the specific working groups promoted by the Spanish Government Secretary of Tourism and the Spanish Institute for Tourism Quality, which will have the supervision of the expert committee of the Ministry of Health. Cultural institutions whose tourist public is one of its most important segments especially participate in this working group. These validated protocols are scheduled to be presented precisely the week of May 11, the date on which the reopening of museums is proposed. The proposal is that this be progressively: on the one hand so that the staff is protected and can follow up on these protocols; on the other, to determine load capacities based on the recommended safety distances, organize reservations in advance, and identify critical points. It is necessary to propose an agenda and roadmap and specific measures for its reactivation and openness to the public, including management with different capacities and special needs before the public of the "new normality".
- **Urgently activate an aid program to guarantee the adaptation of cultural assets, museums and heritage centres to these protocols before they are opened to the public.** This has been one of the measures proposed by Elsa Ibar, Director-General of Heritage of the Generalitat de Catalunya who has the support of Mariàngela Vilallonga, Minister of Culture of Catalonia who is leading RescatCultura, the Rescue Plan for the Cultural Sector. ICOMOS and ICOM Spanish committees participate in the videoconference roundtables to follow up on the Plan and we have considered including this proposal for consideration at the state level. In the same way, Elisa de Cabo, Subdirector General for Historical Heritage of the Spanish Ministry of Culture and Sports, has indicated that in the draft of the next call for aids for properties inscribed on the World Heritage List they have included the prioritization of projects that guarantee the adaptation of World Heritage sites to established protocols.
- **Return to internal activity on May 11 (in the case of museums) and May 27 (in the case of monuments and heritage sites), but delaying opening to the public until safety and hygiene measures and their viability can be guaranteed economic.** It should be remembered that many cultural assets, museums and heritage centres have delegated management of customer service and educational activities for cultural service companies, most of them with their personnel subject to temporary suspension of the contract or reduction of working hours. There are cases with a significant dependence on international tourism (throughout the year, but especially important in vacation periods such as Easter and summer) and school audiences (especially in spring), so they do not foresee their public reopening until it is feasible to do so. Many also have coffee shops/ restaurants and concession or own stores that must adapt to specific protocols and must also face the generation of sufficient income for the maintenance of personnel. The resumption will be as heterogeneous as are the heritage and museum institutions and organizations. Most of them will maintain telework and the commitment to digitization and will gradually and gradually reactivate their activities. The risk of new outbreaks and the consequent change in the de-escalation phases is on the table. Large facilities such as the Prado Museum, the Reina Sofia Museum, the Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum in Madrid, the Sagrada Familia in Barcelona or the Montserrat Monastery are just some examples of those who have chosen to set their reopening to the public when they can ensure the sanitary measures.

- **Write a plan of proposals and measures from ICOMOS (which add to the previous four) as a professional organization of the heritage sector for the State Pact for Culture** that the Spanish Government proposes to implement from the Ministry of Culture and Sports, the Autonomous Communities and the Federation of Municipalities and Provinces. Collaborating in its implementation and monitoring. Programs to support staff, training and technical assistance, as well as actions to reinforce digital and promotional actions, will be key.
- **Contribute to other initiatives developed to face the challenges of heritage conservation, management and promotion against the Covid-19** promoted by international organizations, as well as by public bodies, the private sector and / or third sector organizations.

ICOMOS. About us:

The **International Council of Monuments and Sites - ICOMOS** is an international non-governmental organization dedicated to the conservation and protection of heritage sites and assets (buildings and historic cities, cultural landscapes, archaeological sites, etc.). It is dedicated to promoting the theory, methodology and technology applied to the conservation, protection and safeguarding of monuments and sites. Since its creation in 1965, ICOMOS has been the advisory body of the World Heritage Committee for the implementation of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention. As such, it examines the applications for cultural property and ensures, with its supervision, the state of conservation of the properties inscribed on the World Heritage List.

Currently, ICOMOS is made up of more than 10,000 individual members and 271 institutional members from 151 countries. In addition, ICOMOS has 107 national committees and 28 international scientific committees that represent the interests of the organization at the local level and by professional specialties respectively.

ICOMOS works as a network of experts who collaborate in an interdisciplinary exchange of knowledge and doctrine. Its members include architects, historians, archaeologists, jurists, art historians, geographers, anthropologists, engineers, urban planners, etc. In this way, ICOMOS members contribute to the preservation of heritage, the progress of restoration techniques and the development of regulations applied to cultural heritage assets.

The **ICOMOS-Spain**, as National ICOMOS Committee, officially established in 1980, has 246 individual members and 32 emerging members (young professionals). In addition, it has the support of 19 institutional members, including the Ministry of Culture and Sports, several Directorates-General for Heritage of different Autonomous Governments, professional associations, foundations and other public and private organizations dedicated to the conservation and management of the Spanish cultural heritage.

- Consejería de Educación y Cultura de la Ciudad Autónoma de Ceuta.
- Consejo General de Colegios Oficiales de Aparejadores y Arquitectos Técnicos.

- Consorci Serra de Tramuntana Patrimonio Mundial.
- Departamento de Educación, Cultura y Deporte del Gobierno de Aragón.
- Diputación Provincial de Jaén.
- Dirección General de Patrimonio Cultural del Gobierno del Principado de Asturias.
- Dirección General de Bellas Artes del Ministerio de Cultura y Deportes.
- Dirección General de Bienes Culturales del Gobierno de la Comunidad Autónoma de la Región de Murcia.
- Dirección General de Cultura y Patrimonio de la Generalitat Valenciana.
- Dirección General de Cultura del Gobierno de La Rioja.
- Dirección General de Patrimonio Cultural de la Xunta de Galicia.
- Direcció General del Patrimoni Cultural de la Generalitat de Catalunya.
- Dirección General de Bibliotecas, Museos y Patrimonio Cultural de la Junta de Extremadura.
- Dirección General del Patrimonio Cultural de la Junta de Castilla y León.
- Excmo. Ayuntamiento de A Coruña.
- Excmo. Ayuntamiento de Córdoba.
- Excmo. Ayuntamiento de Santiago de Compostela.
- Patronato de la Alhambra y Generalife.
- Patrimonio Nacional.

ICOMOS Spain Working Group on Heritage and Covid-19

To articulate this phase of heritage reactivation, an **ICOMOS Spain Working Group on Heritage and Covid-19** has been created, coordinated by Jordi Tresserras, director of the LABPATC Laboratory of Heritage and Cultural Tourism of the University of Barcelona and Vice-President of ICOMOS Spain, and Juan Carlos Molina, co-coordinator of the National Risk and Emergency Management Plan promoted by the Institute of Cultural Heritage of Spain -IPCE of the Ministry of Culture and Sports, member of the ICOMOS Spain board and coordinator of the Blue Shield Spain of which ICOMOS has the presidency during the period 2020-23.

This group of experts brings together several of the institutional members of ICOMOS, as well as those responsible for the management of the main heritage sites in the country - where those inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list such as the cities of Alcalá de Henares Ávila, Cuenca, La Laguna, Mérida, Santiago de Compostela, Segovia and Ubeda, Atapuerca archaeological sites, Alhambra and the Generalife in Granada, Saint James Ways, Hanging Bridge of Bizkaia, Almadén mines, Tower of Hercules in A Coruña, monasteries of Suso and Yuso in La Rioja, Gaudí's Works as Casa Milà – La Pedrera and Colonia Güell in Barcelona, Cultural Landscape of Aranjuez, Palm groves of Elche, or Risco Caído in Gran Canaria, among others). Likewise, associations such as the Group of Spanish World Heritage Cities and cultural networks and routes such as the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe are included, among which we highlight the Saint James Ways, Prehistoric Rock Art Paths, the European Association of Jewish Heritage, or the European Routes of Charles V. Other networks have been added, such as Catalonia Sacra, which brings together the 10 bishoprics based in Catalonia, and significant cultural assets, such as the Montserrat Monastery.

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To follow up, a specific web space has been set up to inform professionals in the sector and interested persons <https://icomos.es/covid-19/>

Likewise, synergies have been generated to join efforts especially with the Spanish Committee of the International Council of Museums - ICOM. Similarly, with ICOMOS International and other ICOMOS committees from countries that are examples of good practice in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Contact

For any additional information we are at your entire disposal:

Dr. Jordi Tresserras Juan

Vice President of ICOMOS Spain and head of the "Participate" area

Director of LABPATC Laboratory of Cultural Heritage and Tourism of the Universitat de Barcelona

Tel. / Whatsapp (+34) 609328582

Email: jjuan@ub.edu

Juan Carlos Molina Gaitán

Member of ICOMOS Spain Board and coordinator of the Blue Shield Spain for ICOMOS that has the presidency in the period 2020-23

Co-coordinator of the National Risk and Emergency Management Plan promoted by the Institute of Cultural Heritage of Spain -IPCE of the Spanish Ministry of Culture and Sports.

Tel. / Whatsapp (+34) 639 10 92 02

Email: j.c.molinagaitan@gmail.com

Camino Enríquez

Executive Secretary ICOMOS Spain

Tel. / Whatsapp: (+34) 676 43 82 45

Email: secretaria@icomos.es

If it is by email, we suggest always send a copy to secretaria@icomos.es