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Zsuzsanna Fehér and Katalin Ásványi

Institute of Sustainable Development, Corvinus University of Budapest, Budapest, Hungary

ABSTRACT

Research on sustainability in museums typically focuses on one dimension of sustainability, with little research on a holistic understanding of sustainability. Research on how museums align with sustainability is not a new topic, but rare in the context of contemporary art museums. The paper aims to analyse how European contemporary art museums have incorporated sustainability into their mission statements. The study uses a qualitative discourse analysis method to examine the content of the missions of 50 European contemporary art museums. From a regional perspective, in general, an openness towards sustainability and a holistic approach is less visible in the mission, but more so in non-CEE countries. Environmental management, economic stability and innovative, proactive behaviour are also stronger in non-CEE countries. In terms of societal roles CEE museums are primarily concerned with educating society, while non-CEE museums are already playing the role of the agent of change in social transformation.

Introduction

Museums play a unique role in sustainability by preserving the cultural heritage of their communities and ensuring the accumulation and transfer of cultural capital of current generations for future generations. In addition to their core functions of collecting, preserving, and researching, museums have additional functions. In the modern approach, education is now emerging as an essential museum function. The post-modern perspective, on the other hand, emphasizes the role of museums in sustainable development (Pop and Borza 2015).

Museums are under increasing pressure to be sustainable and to rethink their traditional scope and practices (Janes 2010). The International Council of Museums (ICOM) keeps redefining the role of museums: "The museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, research, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of

humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment" (ICOM 2007). As the definition, however, does not sufficiently reflect the complexity of the 21st century, the current responsibilities of museums and the challenges of the future, the new definition was adopted in Prague in August 2022. The new version places greater emphasis on the role of communities, introduces a new element of openness, accessibility, and inclusiveness for the general public, and appears the sustainability as a new phenomenon: "A museum is a not-for-profit, permanent institution in the service of society that researches, collects, conserves, interprets and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage. Open to the public, accessible and inclusive, museums foster diversity and sustainability. They operate and communicate ethically, professionally and with the participation of communities, offering varied experiences for education, enjoyment, reflection, and knowledge sharing" (ICOM 2020).

The International Committee for Museums and Collections of Modern Art (CIMAM) is actively involved in discussing issues affecting museums and society (CIMAM 2022). They are the museums best placed to reflect authentically on the social problems of our time, bridging the gap between the active art community and contemporary society (Campolmi 2013).

The mission statement plays a key role for an organization, as it contains the most basic information about the organization, such as what its purpose is, what product or service it provides, who its users are and how it differs from its competitors. Previous research has shown that the more specifically sustainability is reflected in an organization's mission, the more likely its sustainability practices and performance will be higher (Lopez and Martin 2018).

The mission articulates the role of museums in society and, in relation to this, interprets the goals of museums. If we understand museums as social institutions, one of the cornerstones of their functioning is the question of legitimacy and social acceptance (Brønn and Vidaver-Cohen 2009), which goes hand in hand with the question of the role and responsibility of museums in society. The challenge for museums in the 21st century is to play a role in sustainable development (ICOM 2020). However, this is not only a challenge but also an opportunity, as museums can develop the image of museums by shaping public discourse and public debate.

Research on sustainability in museums typically focuses on one dimension or sub-dimension of sustainability, with little research on a holistic understanding of sustainability for museums (Pop and Borza 2015; Pop et al. 2019). To the best of our knowledge, the exploration of sustainability in the museum context from a regional perspective has not been addressed. The research by Pop et al. (2019) focused on the extent to which it specifically examined the potential for implementing sustainability practices in one country. Based on the case of Romania, they formulated influencing factors that may be relevant for identifying regional differences as the presence or absence of problems related to natural hazards caused by climate instability and the different levels of cultural consumption. Cultural context needs to be considered when interpreting the findings.

This paper analyses the sustainability approaches and goals of European contemporary art museums based on the information set out in their mission statements. Discourse analysis was used to examine the mission statements of 50 contemporary art museums. In this methodology, we do not use predetermined category systems to examine conceptions of reality, but by examining texts about reality, we get a picture of how individual

actors interpret their own position in the social space and what strategic moves they use to enforce this interpretation. We identify the main dimensions of sustainability in the context of museums that form the framework of the study, and then describe the methodology and present the results. Finally, we draw conclusions and make suggestions for future research directions.

The novelty of the paper is that the analysis of missions in museums has not been carried out before, especially not through discursive content analysis, and that European contemporary art museums have not been specifically studied in this context

Literature review

Sustainability is more than just combination of the different subdimensions (the three pillars: economic, environmental and social). However, the understanding of sustainability differs between museums and corporations, as corporations are profit maximizing, whereas museums are typically not profit oriented and need to engage in sustainable behaviour with a wider range of stakeholders than profit maximizing organizations. The complexity and diversity of sustainability in museums is illustrated in the following section and summarized in Figure 1.

Sustainability in museums

The role of sustainability in museums has been addressed in several previous studies, but the authors have taken different approaches to the issue.

According to Soini and Dessein (2016), the relationship between culture and sustainability can be approached in three ways.
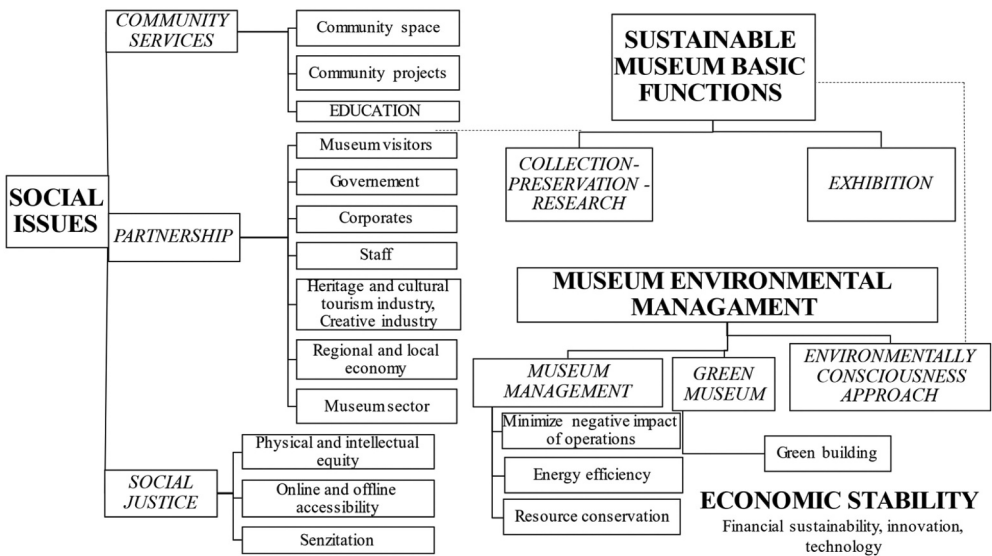

Figure 1. The museum sustainability model. Source: Own representation

- Culture in Sustainability, where culture constitutes the fourth pillar of sustainability.
- Culture for Sustainability, where culture plays a mediating role between the three pillars.
- Culture as Sustainability, where culture is at the centre and is an overarching dimension of the other three pillars.

Pop and Borza (2015) and Pop et al. (2019) have interpreted the relationship between museums and sustainability from a different perspective, with the two approaches being fundamentally complementary and linked to the museum's mission. Museums for sustainability: how museums contribute to sustainable development by being culturally sustainable; what museums can do to enhance quality of life and achieve economic growth (Pop and Borza 2016a). Sustainability for museums: how museums' sustainable practices can contribute to the fulfilment of the cultural mission, how museums approach sustainability, what are their practices. In one case, culture is a resource for achieving sustainability goals, in the other case, it is a goal achieved through sustainability, which together help museums to fulfil their mission (Cerquetti and Montella 2021).

Pop and Borza (2016b), however, stated that economic stability is a prerequisite for sustainability, i.e. a museum must be economically sustainable in the first instance, and only then can it address the other pillars of sustainability. The economic sustainability of museums is mostly understood in the literature in terms of funding, but it is important to complement this with the role of the market and the impact of innovation and technology (Fehér, Ásványi, and Jászberényi 2021). However, achieving economic stability is a challenge for museums, and in many cases, therefore museum managers do not address the issue of sustainability (Ferika and Nazli 2018). However, we also see approaches where museums take advantage of the competitive advantage of the term "being green" (Pop and Borza 2015; Pop et al. 2019).

In this paper we do not explicitly interpret museum sustainability along the sustainability pillars, but rather follow the principle of Alshuwaikhat and Abubakar's (2008) academic sustainability model of building on economic sustainability. Sustainable museum practices are interpreted and categorized along environmental issues, social issues and the functions of the institution. Within the dimensions, sub-dimensions can be linked to several dimensions at the same time, and their interconnections are indicated in the sustainability museum model illustrated in Figure 1.

Museum environmental management

Environmental management is essentially about operating in an environmentally conscious way, which includes museum management (Pop and Borza 2015) and the green design of museum buildings (Sterrett and Piantavigna 2018). Pencarelli et al. (2016) highlighted the reduction of energy consumption as one of the main tasks of environmental management, while other researchers (Rota, Corgnati, and Di Corato 2015) conceptualized it as a reduction of the environmental impact of cultural activities. Sutton et al. (2017), however, also considered waste management, water efficiency, carbon footprint measurement and green consumption as an important part of museum management. Reducing the consumption of natural resources and recycling of resources was also highlighted by Lambert and Henderson (2011). According to Wickham and Lehman (2015), within resource allocation and use,

museums should also address pollution management, vehicle management and renewable energy use (Sterrett and Piantavigna 2018). More efficient use of resources can also be facilitated by technological innovations (Bell, Hillier, and Chilvers 2008), such as eco-save light bulbs, environmental impact measurement of equipment (Lambert and Henderson 2011), and lighting and climate control (Bickersteth 2016). Arroyo et al. (2016), on the other hand, approached this topic from the perspective of natural resource conservation and biodiversity protection. The green building design of museums has also been addressed by several researchers (Brophy and Wylie 2013; Newell, Robin, and Wehner 2016), as well as related eco-design (Sterrett and Piantavigna 2018). However, in the approach of Fehér et al. (2021), the communication of an environmentally conscious approach is also part of environmental sustainability.

Social issues

The social sustainability issues are divided into three sub-dimensions: partnership, community services and social justice.

Partnership can take the form of contributing to the development of society (Arinze 1999). One of the key stakeholders is museum visitors, which includes offline visitors as well as online visitors. Developments in information and communication technology provide a much wider market for museums than physical visitors (Gustafsson and Ijla 2017). There is a need to broaden the existing visitor base, which requires an audience-centred approach (Di Pietro et al. 2014; Siu et al. 2013). The development of partnerships is also essential from a financial funding perspective, where the museum also receives public funding, corporate or private donations, and volunteers are part of these stakeholders (Adams 2010). The presence of trained and responsible staff is also critical for the socially sustainable development of museums (Silence 2010). The role of museums has broadened in the 21st century, becoming key partners and actors in heritage and cultural tourism, as well as creative and innovative industries (Gustafsson and Ijla 2017). Museums can contribute to sustainable development by adding economic value to creative industries; they contribute to wealth creation, job creation and employment for regional and local economies (Reeves 2002). However, an important part of this partnership is also the potential collaborations with other actors in the museum sector (Li and Ghirardi 2019).

Pop and Borza (2015) highlight social issues through community engagement, as museums engage people emotionally and intellectually (Campolmi 2013). Several researchers (Azmat et al. 2018; Belfiore and Bennett 2007) see the social sustainability of museums in the creation or strengthening of communities, i.e. it is essential to build a deep, long-term relationship with as wide an audience as possible (Virto, López, and San-Martin 2017). Visser (2014) highlights active communities, groups of people who meet regularly and create together in online or offline spaces according to their common interests, opinions and values. Throsby (2016) argues that museums' social mission is to serve the community and the public, and to create value for future generations. Museums have the potential to shape socially responsible behaviour in communities through exhibitions and events (Manna and Palumbo 2018; Pencarelli, Cerquetti, and Splendiani 2016). Just (2014) has also highlighted the increasing commitment of museums to community development, inclusion-involvement, and the coordination of social and learning activities. As community spaces, museums are emerging as new community centres (Jung 2011). The museum of the 21st century can be seen not only as an institution but as a living

organization and a social platform that acts as a catalyst for community development, engaging museum visitors, even though personal interaction with artists (Ásványi, Fehér, and Jászberényi 2020). The educational function of museums is also steadily growing, which helps to transmit community beliefs and practices (Härkönen, Huhmarniemi, and Jokela 2018), through which they can raise awareness of important and current social issues. Advances in technology are also helping museums to become agents of social cohesion and to contribute to the understanding of history and cultural diversity by increasing young people's knowledge (Pencarelli, Cerquetti, and Splendiani 2016).

The social justice subdimension is used in terms of the distribution of cultural opportunities within society. Gheorghilas et al. (2017) argue that the museum has a responsibility to reach all groups in society. Public access can be increased through the development of technology and digitalization (Guccio et al. 2016). At the same time, the dimension includes accessibility in both physical and intellectual terms (Pencarelli, Cerquetti, and Splendiani 2016), which aims to interpret art in a way that is understandable to all, i.e. to avoid elitism in the museum, which would exclude certain groups (Belfiore 2002). Social justice also involves differentiated sensitization of different target groups (Arinze 1999), creating a socially inclusive society (Azmat et al. 2018; Belfiore and Bennett 2007), i.e. by connecting individuals and communities, they can bring about social change towards acceptance and inclusion (Crooke 2008).

Sustainable museum functions

The basic function of museums, from a sustainable perspective, is to preserve collections and maintain quality (Pop and Borza 2015), and cultural resources should be preserved not only for the present but also for future generations (Blagoeva-Yarkova 2012). Lambert et al. (2014) argue that a sustainable museum should consider, preserve and present the tangible and intangible heritage, artistic production and the knowledge and skills of different social groups, communities and nations. Modern technology also facilitates the digitization of collections management (Mamrayeva and Aikambetova 2014), thereby contributing to cultural and environmental sustainability. In the context of collections management, Ásványi et al. (2020) even point out that it would be worthwhile to find alternative solutions to replace current air travel, which would reduce the environmental impact of travelling with artefacts. According to Campolmi (2013), in addition to preserving cultural values, ensuring understanding is part of cultural sustainability, i.e. an exhibition should be professionally unobjectionable and made understandable to the general public by other means (Ásványi, Fehér, and Jászberényi 2020).

Exhibitions provide an appropriate arena for museums to bring the public closer to different social and environmental issues: democratic worldviews, peace between families, communities, and nations (Arinze 1999), environmental issues (Aguayo, Eames, and Cochrane 2020). Museums are also responsible for shaping the cultural tastes and preferences of visitors, so they must not only meet the needs of visitors, but also stimulate community interest in a particular direction. Through their exhibitions, museums' involvement in debates on environmental and social issues (Sutter 2008) can influence visitors' attitudes. Social changes in Europe are also changing and expanding the cultural diversity of the population, and the ageing population with more leisure time is broadening cultural expectations towards museums (Pencarelli, Cerquetti, and Splendiani 2016).

Method

In order to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of social roles in museum discourse, we apply the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) method, including the ideas of the discourse history school associated with Ruth Wodak (Géring 2017; Wodak 2001). The method goes beyond a purely linguistic analysis in interpreting the notions of text and discourse, and goes beyond the narrow context of the text to include social structures and processes in the focus of analysis.

In our research, we examine the approaches, goals and regional specificities of contemporary art museums in different social contexts within a framework of sustainability, based on their mission statements. The mission statement sets out a vision of the role of museums in society, and in this context, it interprets the mission and objectives of museums. This in turn brings to the forefront and thus into the public discourse the question of the role of museums, which also brings with it a legitimation difficulty, since museums have to deal with an unquestioned issue (even if only at the level of communication), which until now was a given, or at least seemed to be, namely that the function of museums is determined solely by their collections and therefore they have to comply with them. There are differences between CEE and non-CEE countries in their financial and economic development (Andrieş, Ieşan-Muntean, and Nistor 2016), which could also affect museums' sustainability approaches.

After the selection of the corpus of texts and the coding and data collection, part of the analysis and interpretation is the inclusion of the social context in which the European museums' activities are situated, which serve as a basis for the structures that determine the current interpretative frameworks and the concrete communicative acts themselves.

The following main and sub-research questions were formulated:

RQ: What sustainability approaches and goals characterize European contemporary art museums based on the information set out in their mission statements?

RQ1: How do museums thematize and define their role in sustainability, and what do they indicate as their main goals in their mission statements?

RQ2: To which dimension of sustainability do museums contribute most?

RQ3: Are there significant regional differences in the sustainability contents of the mission statements? What are the differences of mission statements between CEE and non-CEE countries' museums?

We do not have an exact count of the number of art museums and, within that, the number of fine art and contemporary art museums. We have included museums from all European regions in our sample, with 1 museum from each country as a general principle, and 2–3 museums from larger countries with significantly more museums. Only relatively young museums, established around the 2000s, deal exclusively with contemporary art, but in this research, we use the term contemporary art museum to refer to museums that include contemporary art in their collections and exhibition programmes. Contemporary art museums play a special role, acting as both a space for aesthetic experience and

critical reflection, as well as contributing to the deepening of collective and individual knowledge (Campolmi 2013). Based on their prior professional knowledge of the activities of European contemporary art museums, the researchers selected 50 museums, which can be analysed to provide a comprehensive picture of museum approaches and goals in Europe. Only the publicly available mission statements were selected. As there are no official requirements for the structure of a mission statement, they were diverse in their structure. A total of 16 CEE and 34 non-CEE museums were selected for the sample. The websites of all museums were scanned, and the mission statements were stored in a database.

In discourse analysis, the coding system is developed by reading and analysing the texts themselves. To make the process transparent, the list of codes identified in the mission of the first 20 museums was used to analyse the other museums, and codes with very similar meanings were merged to reduce the number of codes. Along the lines of the research questions, we examined the roles, tasks and objectives explicitly or implicitly articulated by each museum in relation to sustainability. After analysing the first 20 museums, a total of 17 codes related to the dimensions of the sustainability model were included in the code system. The mission statements of the other 30 museums were then analysed, and this list was restructured, the codes that were found relevant were left in and those that were not mentioned before were added.

The resulting code system is representative of the social roles and purposes of contemporary art museums. Although our approach to discourse analysis uses almost exclusively qualitative analyses, we have also examined the frequency of their occurrence. This helps us not only to see a list of the goals and concepts used in the discourse, but also to get an idea of the regional spread and differences in their use.

Findings

The analysis has identified the roles and purposes of contemporary art museums in managing (collecting, preserving, researching, and displaying) the art values of the present and making them available to present and future societies taking into account social and environmental impacts. Along these priorities, cultural practices that define a sustainable museum in the 21st century can be outlined.

A total of 15 role codes were identified and analysed along 215 subcodes. In Table 1, we have aggregated the role codes in 50 museums and, where relevant, highlighted the codes in museums in CEE countries, which highlights the objectives and roles along which different approaches and goals exist in these countries.

Sustainability issues

Innovative and proactive behaviour

In their mission statements, 14 museums claimed to be "*open to exploration and new perspectives and prospects on contemporary culture*" (EMST). It is best illustrated by Tate Modern's mission statement by highlighting the fact that museums need to rethink what their core mission is, where they want to take the lead and what they want to adapt to: "*We will redefine museum experiences for the 21st century, offering a greater depth and range of experiences and offering visitors multiple points of engagement with our collection*

Table 1. Frequency of codes identified in missions by region.

	CEE		non-CEE	
Codes	Number of Museums (n=16)	Rate of Museums (%)	Number of Museums (N=34)	Rate of Museums (%)
Sustainability issues				
1.Innovative and proactive behaviour	2	12%	12	35%
2.Sustainability	1	0,6%	10	29%
Museum Environmental management				
3.Environmental management	1	0,6%	5	15%
Economic stability				
4.Economic issues	3	19%	10	29%
Sustainable museum basic functions				
5.Collection	13	80%	25	73%
6.Exhibition	13	80%	18	53%
7.Art centricity	10	62%	13	29%
8.Supporting scientific research	10	62%	15	44%
9.Achieving professional recognition	3	20%	13	29%
Social issues				
10.Educational role	10	62%	13	29
11.Partnership	10	62%	15	44
12.The meeting place of art and society	8	50%	13	29%
13.Community involvement	9	56%	10	29%
14.Accessibility	9	56%	20	59%
15.Influencing society through art	7	44%	22	65%

Source: Own representation.

and ideas about art." While museums in Central and Eastern Europe have expressed openness to new things, museums in other regions of Europe have already shown more confidence and leadership: "*We must dare to push boundaries and take new paths in the way we manage our tasks. Proceeding from our fundamental stability, we want to challenge ourselves and to not be afraid for experiments to fail.*" (Moderna Museet) The following areas outline the future renewal of museums: "to seek collaboration, and to find new perspectives and the playful joy of gaining new ground" (Moderna Museet), digital renewal and a changing museum experience – "*digital leader, providing the leading online resource*" (IMMA), museums should be "*open to transformation*" (Weserburg Museum).

Sustainability

A general commitment to sustainability was identified in the mission statements of 11 museums along 6 subcodes. Two non-CEE museums use the term "*sustainable approach*" in their mission statement in general (Serralves Museum, Reina Sophia). As museums are fundamentally social institutions, their operation and responsibility for a sustainable future is primarily seen in this context, as highlighted by three non-CEE museums (MACBA, MAXXI, MUDAM): "*MAXXI's mission is therefore that of promoting and developing this sense of continuity, projecting it towards the future.*" Only one museum from an Eastern European country mentioned that its activities should be based on sustainable practices that consider environmental and social impacts, emphasizing the two pillars of sustainability: "*rest on sustainable practices that take into account environmental and social impacts*" (Ludwig Museum, Budapest). Five non-CEE museums have defined their operations along similar

principles (Moderna Museet, ARoS, Weserburg Museum, Gulbenkian Museum, Museum der Moderne Salzburg). Their missions reflect the approach of Cerquetti and Montella (2021), whereby museums seek to fulfil their cultural objectives along sustainability goals.

Museum environmental management

Environmental management

Although some museums have indicated that environmental emergency is one of the most important challenges of our time (Centre Pompidou) and that they envisage their operations taking environmental impacts into account (Ludwig Museum Budapest, Moderna Museet, Museum der Moderne Salzburg, Weseburg Museum), only one museum has indicated that it aims to become a green museum (ARoS).

Economic stability

As a fundamental approach to economic stability, disciplined and efficient resource management is mentioned only by a museum run by a foundation, partly by public and partly by private actors (Serralves Museum). In connection with responsible human resource management, the importance of establishing transparent pay categories and defining managerial and senior management responsibilities is emerging (Kiasma). Two institutions mention the leading role of museums in the creative sector (Reina Sophia, MAXXI) and one in cultural tourism (KUMU). The development of a new economic model has emerged as an important aspect for two museums (Tate Modern, Reina Sophia), which will allow museums to operate more flexibly and implement innovative initiatives. However, a topic – the importance of involving private collectors, sponsors and patrons – has also appeared in five museums, suggesting that the promotion of culture is an important aspect of museum practices and that museums are consciously striving to give prestige to their high-quality art projects for the business world, know-how transfer, to implement different cultural engineering projects (Centre Pompidou), the role of the museum as a player in the art business (Museum Folkwang), to promote economic equality by offering a free-entrance day for all museum visitors once a month (Kiasma), „self-financed art museum that values good business methods and practices" (MO Vilnius). It presents and reinforces the importance of the fine arts and visual culture in the value system of the global community, increasing self-generated revenue (Tate Modern). The findings of previous authors (Pop and Borza 2016a, 2016b; Ferika and Nazli 2018) are confirmed by the mission statements, which emphasize that although achieving economic stability is a challenge, it is an important prerequisite for addressing other dimensions of sustainability.

Sustainable museum functions

Collection and exhibition

Collection, which is the core activity of museums, is one of the most frequently mentioned functions, both in CEE and non-CEE countries. 38 museums defined their collection functions along 23 subcodes. As a concept closely related to collecting, 9 subcodes were identified under the exhibition code, which 31 museums highlighted in their mission statement. One of the key issues in Museum Folkwang's approach is:

"*In a changing society, how holdings should be treated and collections advanced?*" Since an "*Art collection is a record of dynamic phenomena and developments, occurring locally and globally*" (MMA), it is important for collecting to recognize and respond to these phenomena. The approach of "*collection in dialogue with works of contemporary artists*" (S-M.A.K.) also defines the activity of contemporary museums, i.e. museums not only exhibit works but also establish a dialogue with the artist. This approach is also highlighted by museums in Central and Eastern Europe, as the presentation of new, innovative, and relevant artistic trends and the importance of "*collaboration with their authors*." Reina Sophia also draws attention to the role of the community: *"Collection does not tell a compact and exclusive story; it is an archive of communality. It is not an obsessive desire to preserve and conserve everything, but rather only that which the members of the community consider pertinent or that forms part of their actions"*. As Pencarelli et al. (2016) claimed, visitor diversity can broaden the offer of museums, but at the same time the responsibility of the museum is to shape the community and not to satisfy needs (Ásványi, Fehér, and Jászberényi 2020). However, the codes identified in the other non-CEE museums confirm Ásványi et al.'s (2020) thought: highlight themes that impact our societies, based on the freedom and creativity of the artists, exhibition space serving as an ideal framework for shared experiences, a deeper understanding of collection, brighten up the urban space of the museum.

Art-centricity

For contemporary art museums, art has an important and prominent role. In this context, 23 museums have defined their aims in a total of 20 subcodes. Subcodes typical for museums in CEE were the following: more space for the previously neglected contemporary art (Moderna galerija), taking an active role in the promotion of local art abroad (MUS), promoting art as a valid component of social life, which makes our human existence complete and more valuable (Museum Sztuki Lodz), incubator for new ideas for domestic and foreign artists (Ludwig Museum Budapest, KUMU). These ideas confirm the claim of Sutter (2008), that museums can shape the attitudes of visitors by addressing different themes.

Supporting scientific research

Scientific, research-based work was identified in the mission statements of 25 museums, and roles were identified along a total of 16 subcodes. The importance of research is fundamental for all museums, as museums are institutions engaged in scientific activities and prove to be a good platform for research: A museum's operations, its collecting and exhibiting activities provide an empirical platform for both scholarly and experimental research approaches and projects which, in particular, place the focus on the future of the museum: a museum's "mission" in a changing society (Museum Folkwang). The museums are involved in collaborative research projects at national and international level to strengthen partnerships, with education playing a prominent role. Reinforcing the importance of communication in science, supporting, and accommodating art historians and theorists that specialize in museology codes also underline the importance of research, the significance of which has not been emphasized in previous research.

Achieving professional recognition

Museums, like other academic institutions, seek recognition and prestige and want to be high on the professional map. 32% of the museums have defined in their mission statement the professional recognition they seek. Subcodes identified within this topic are high-quality international collaborations and recognition, which is based on the cutting edge of discourse, artistic research, applying different and untraditional strategy.

Education

The role of education is more prominent in CEE museums, with 62% highlighting their educational role, which is mainly focused on the mediation of art, supporting the understanding of contemporary art and expanding the creative abilities of individuals, compared to 29% in non-CEE countries. It is also important to note that the subcodes identified in the educational role of museums are also the codes that define museums as creative locations for learning, inspiring knowledge of the world and oneself through art, encouraging critical thinking, and offering opportunities for a deeper understanding of things. Education is a platform where aesthetic action can shape experience, create new forms of political subjectivity, and make each individual an agent capable of creating meaning (Sommers and Gabriel Marian 2019). The task of the art museum is to communicate research-based information about the interpretations of life found in art. As highlighted by Härkönen et al. (2018), a strengthening of the educational function is visible.

Social issues

The thematic structure of the discourse of social participation is characterized by the fact that the range of social roles thematized by museums, ie not only rarely appearing in the discourse, but legitimately present, is very wide. In our analysis, we identified 6 social role codes and 116 subcodes.

Partnership

The vision of museums is to become part of a kind of network, whether it be an artistic, social, or economic connection. Several different subcodes emerged related to this topic: collaboration and exchange views, creative cross-fertilization, cooperation with the state, with relevant foreign museums, galleries, collections, curators and critics, local cultural institutions, international foundations, think tanks and universities. As a result of this collaboration emerged a unique development model consisting in co-constructing. An image of the museum appears as a kind of space for negotiation as they are organizing a heterogeneous network of partnerships. These collaborations are based on positive and reciprocal approach to multiple fields and disciplines, to generate spaces for negotiation rather than mere representation, to serve as an active link, constantly building a dialogue: within the museum team itself and in their pursuit of creative ideas in collaboration with the business, academic and art communities. The diversity of potential partners in the missions also demonstrates the wide range of ways in which a museum can contribute to the development of society through its collaboration with partners.

Meeting place of art and society

Museum as a meeting place for art and society appeared more prominently among museums in CEE, with around 50% of the museums in the region defining their role in this category, compared to 29% in other regions. Typical subcodes for museums in CEE are the following: the museum as a *space for dialogue*, an appropriate environment for contemporary audiences to interact with the heritage of past and present generations of artists, a *living space*, a place for spending time together and talking, for gatherings with or without a special occasion, a *hub for creativity*, a space of discovery, mutual inspiration and reflection. The codes also show that museums in CEE are more interested in being community spaces, the importance of which has been highlighted by Jung (2011), whereby they can be catalysts for community development (Ásványi, Fehér, and Jászberényi 2020).

Visitor engagement – community involvement

20% of museums have defined the way they engage visitors: to mediate art for people, to embrace, challenge, and inspire people to influence thinking about the nature of art and its value to the world, to encourage the audiences to develop their own interpretations, to discuss and share their experiences, to engage local and international audiences in a deeper understanding of our present times through art and culture. The importance of engaging visitors and the community has been highlighted by authors such as Pop and Borza (2015) and Azmat et al. (2018), and the mission statements confirm this.

During the analysis, we identified codes that reflect the role of communities: the Museum is made up of people: the artists, the team, and the public. An important goal was to communicate adequately with the public, to create an active community, to make museum visits a part of everyday life. Visser (2014) also articulated the need for active communities, which is already identified in the mission statements.

Accessibility

Visitors are one of the most important target groups for museums. 38% of museums said that they would like to reach a wider audience, from diverse backgrounds and ages, from different starting points, with an emphasis on accepting groups with special needs, which creates a flexible environment. This supports the conclusions of Pencarelli et al. (2016). 32%, however, also feel that it is their responsibility to promote access to art and culture for a maximum number of people, so they do their best to be accessible and inclusive, because art is for everyone. Art is not just for an elite but includes experiences and visions for the many. The Internet provides free and easy access for as many people as possible.

Influencing society through art

In Central and Eastern Europe, museums emphasize their educational role, while in other regions of Europe 52% of museums see their role as influencing society through art: "*A piece of art in a museum isn't just meant for contemplation. It helps us learn social responsibility, dialogue, critical thinking, and influencing reality.*" (MMO). The museum functions "*as a channel for freedom of speech and expression*" (Kiasma) and is responsible for "*building a freer society*" (MACBA). As a part of society, it plays the role of "*the agent of change in society*" (Moderna Museet) and "*adds a new perspective to the visitor's life,*

triggering social transformations by empowering visitors and users to engage in intense democratic, cultural and educational behaviours" (ARKEN). To ensure equal opportunities for everyone, to fight against racism and discrimination, and for inter-gender equality and respect, not expecting everyone to know or master the same things. The Gulbenkian Museum emphasizes in its mission statement the need to promote "*dialogue between different eras and civilizations, especially between the West and the East,*" which is also closely linked to our main research question through raising awareness of regional differences. Sensitizing society (Arinze 1999) and fostering social acceptance and inclusion (Crooke 2008) are already important goals for museums.

Conclusions

Although the sustainability of museums is a relatively new concept, it has been a topic of debate for many scholars (Pop and Borza 2015). Museum associations worldwide have tried to explain this concept, to formulate the measures that museums should take to achieve sustainability and, finally, to stress the importance of the internal and external transformation of museums towards sustainability. However, it seems that many museums are not able to implement this new management philosophy because of the challenges they face.

The aim of the study was to identify sustainability approaches and goals that characterize European contemporary art museums based on the information set out in their mission statements. 15 codes were identified through a discursive analysis of the mission statements of 50 museums. There is already an openness on the part of several museums to adopt a sustainability approach and not only to implement specific sustainability practices. Based on the dimensions identified in the literature, we categorized the codes along sustainability themes. The results show that economic stability and the need for it is highlighted by several museums as a core condition. Environmental management, although encompassing a wide range of activities in the literature, is nevertheless scattered, and generalized in the missions. Museum buildings are typically not suited to designing environmentally sustainable systems, therefore, sustainable action in the field of environmental management can be taken in relation to the core function of the museum rather than by highlighting environmental problems and raising awareness of environmental sustainability issues through collections and exhibitions for educational purposes. The social roles and the areas related to the core function of the museum were the most prominent sustainability themes, i.e. the dimensions in which museums can contribute most to sustainable development.

Regional differences emerged on several points. In general, an openness towards sustainability and a holistic approach is less visible in the mission of museums, but more so in non-CEE countries. Environmental management, economic stability and innovative, proactive behaviour are also stronger in non-CEE countries. However, sustainability approaches and goals arising from the museum's function are more prominent in CEE museums, with art-centredness, sustainable management of exhibitions and collections, and a stronger research base. In terms of societal roles, the picture is mixed from a regional perspective, with education and community engagement being more prominent in CEE museums, while accessibility and impact on society are more prominent in museums in non-CEE countries. We can conclude that

CEE museums are primarily concerned with educating society, while non-CEE museums are already playing the role of the agent of change in social transformation. An important role is the emergence of Partnership, which is more pronounced in CEE countries and is typically related to the linkage with cultural partners according to the subcodes, while in non-CEE countries the importance of linkage with the economic sphere is also reflected.

After the mapping of the thematic structure, we can identify a further research direction in the question of whether some kind of correlation network can be drawn from all this, i.e. whether a typology of social roles communicated by museums can be developed, which is methodologically and substantively well captured. Our study investigated the ways in which museums present sustainability approaches and goals in their mission statements and the differences between museums in CEE and other countries, thus contributing to both museum management and sustainability research. Research on the sustainability of museums is not a new topic, but it has not been explored before in terms of missions. The novelty of the research is further enhanced by the fact that there has been no research on museum sustainability specifically in the context of European contemporary art museums. However, the present study was limited to exploring the missions of museums and did not analyse other sources of information from museums that could provide additional information on museums' attitudes towards sustainability. Therefore, in the future, it would be worthwhile to extend the research to analyse the information and strategy documents of the museums' entire website and to explore other methodologies, such as case studies. In future studies the analysis should also be carried out along the SDG goals. The results contribute to the discussion on the role of museums in society and highlight that the mission statement can also be an indicator of sustainability, setting out values and a strategy for the future for museums and their stakeholders.

Disclosure statement

Notes on contributors

Zsuzsanna Feher is PhD candidate at Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary. She holds a MA in Art History from the ELTE Faculty of Humanities, Budapest. Her areas of research are related to sustainable museum and museum communication. She is currently a deputy director of Ludwig Museum - Museum of Contemporary Art in Budapest and lecturer at Corvinus University of Budapest.

Katalin Ásványi is an Associate Professor, and she is the Head of the Department of Sustainability Management and Environmental Economics. She has courses, both English and Hungarian, focusing on sustainability management, corporate social responsibility and CSR communication at BA, MA and postgraduate levels. She specializes in the fields of sustainable museums and business education for sustainability. She is the chair of the Steering Committee of the newly launched ERS HUB group, an initiative that strives to bring together faculty members and their initiative in fields of ethics, responsibility and sustainability.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Abbreviations of museums

ARKEN: Museum of Modern Art Copenhagen/Denmark
ARoS: Aarhus Kunstmuseum, Aarhus/Denmark
EMST: National Museum of Contemporary Art Athens /Greece
IMMA: Irish Museum of Modern Art Dublin/Ireland
KIASMA: Museum of Contemporary Art Helsinki/Finnland
KUMU: Kumu Art Museum, Tallin/Estonia
MACBA: Barcelona Museum of Contemporary Art/Spain
MAXXI: National Museum of 21st-century Arts Rome/Italy
MMA: Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw/Poland
MO Vilnius: Modern Art Museum Vilnius/Lithuania
MUDAM: Grand Duke Jean Museum of Modern Art/Luxembourg
MSU: Museum of Contemporary Art Zagreb/Croatia
S-M.A.K.: Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst Ghent/Belgium
MoCAB: Museum of Contemporary Art Belgrade/Serbia