

CZECH REPUBLIC

Short cultural policy profile

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1. Facts and figures

Political system: *Parliamentary republic with a two-chamber parliament*

Official language(s): *Czech*

	2020	2015
<i>Population on 1 January</i>	10 693 939	10 538 275
<i>GDP in million USD</i>	213 677.5	169 605.6
<i>GDP per capita in PPS Index (EU27_2020 = 100)</i>	94	91
<i>General government expenditure (in % of GDP)</i>	47.2	41.9
<i>Public cultural expenditure in million EUR</i>	1 198.3	745.5
<i>Public cultural expenditure as % of GDP</i>	0.6	0.4
<i>Public cultural expenditure per Capita in EUR</i>	112.1	70.7
<i>Share of cultural employment of total employment</i>	3.9%	3.7%

Sources: Population on January 1st (2021),

<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tps00001/default/table?lang=en>

GDP in million EUR,

https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/namq_10_gdp/default/table?lang=en

GDP per capita in PPS Index (EU27_2020 = 100),

<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tec00114/default/table?lang=en>

General government expenditure (in % of GDP),

<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tec00023/default/table?lang=en>

Public cultural expenditure / Public cultural expenditure as % of GDP / Public cultural expenditure per Capita: see also chapter 7.1.1 of the national Compendium profile

Share of cultural employment of total employment

https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/cult_emp_sex/default/table?lang=en

2. Cultural policy system

2.1 Objectives

State cultural policy is the responsibility of the Ministry of Culture. The culture concept in recent years has focused on supporting identity, intercultural dialogue, access to culture, and mobility support. Cultural heritage has been emphasized the most as it has been the main topic of all state cultural policies so far. In 2019, the new Minister of Culture was appointed and began to prepare a new strategy; he also spoke about the new vision of culture in the Czech Republic (hereinafter referred to as the CR). The preparations were interrupted by the Covid 19 crisis which has dramatically changed the paradigm and influenced the course of cultural development. The recently amended State Cultural Policy that was amended in September focuses on the development of live art, the development of cultural and creative industries, increasing the availability and accessibility of culture, strengthening its role in society, as well as efficient cultural heritage care. The aims also include brand new topics associated with the consequences of the pandemic crisis, such as the introduction of the non-existent Status of the Artist, dealing with the impact of the climate crisis on culture, and strengthening inter-ministerial cooperation.

The strategy is presented as a fundamental change in the approach to culture, creativity, and the arts. The general goal is a broader concept of culture and creativity among sectors, which is an integral part of society and the economy. The need for this transformation was underpinned by the current pandemic which has hit the cultural and creative industries extremely hard. To recover the previous state, the role of the Ministry should be extended so that it can be an effective manager of the sector. Strategies aim at linking culture and creativity with business, regional development, the social system, the education system, and healthcare. The new cultural policy has been also for the first time developed partly with a participative method¹.

2.2 Main features

The central body of state administration for the field of culture is the Ministry of Culture (hereinafter referred to as the MC). The MC processes cultural policy, prepares drafts of acts and other legal provisions in the field of culture, and carries out tasks connected with the negotiation of international treaties. It also de-

¹ [State Cultural Policy 2021-2025+](#)

velops international relations and cooperation and other duties that the CR has in meeting its obligations under international treaties and membership of international organisations.

The MC supports the arts, cultural activities and the preservation of cultural heritage with grants and contributions from the "culture" division of the state budget of the CR. It establishes 31 state-managed organisations.

There are two state funds operating at the state level: the State Cinematography Fund and the State Cultural Fund of the CR. Administration of the State Cultural Fund falls under the authority of the MC, which is responsible for the financial management of the fund's resources. The State Cinematography Fund is an independent institution, but the MC nonetheless retains influence over it by exercising certain functions.

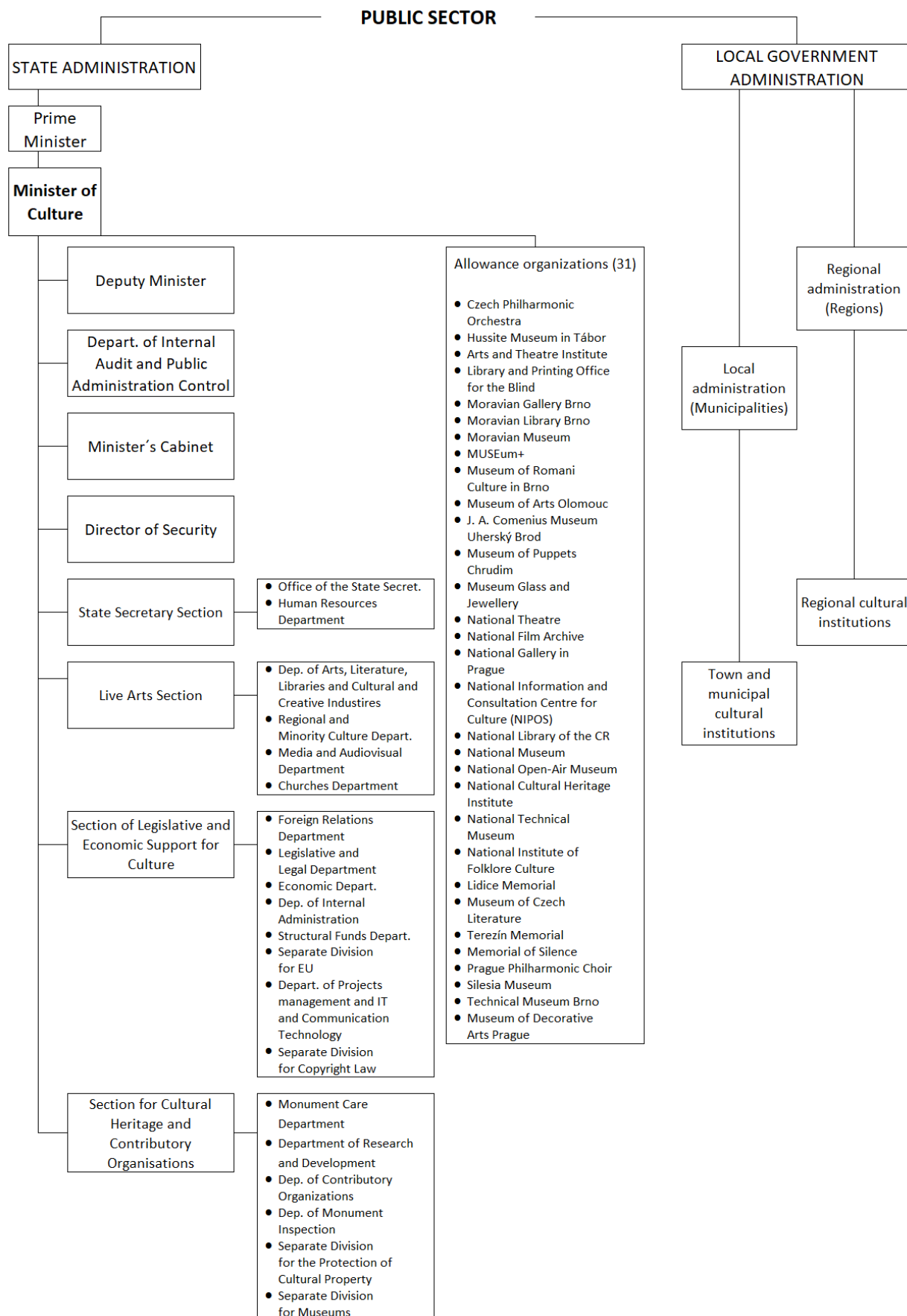
Culture also figures at the state level in the concept materials of other ministries, mainly the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other bodies of state administration.

An essential role in cultural policy is also played by regions and municipalities through the regional and municipal authorities. Fourteen regions support the development of culture and establish regional libraries, museums and galleries, regional theatres, orchestras and institutes of archaeological preservation from their budget. The regions also co-create financial, conceptual and legislative assumptions for the development of culture in the region in conformity with concepts of the government of the CR and recommendations of the Ministry of Culture.

Towns and municipalities are responsible for the general cultural development and needs of their citizens. Some municipalities establish cultural institutions, especially municipal and local libraries, municipal galleries and municipal and local museums, theatres, orchestras and other specialized cultural institutions. Many towns announce specialized tenders for the support of cultural projects. Some towns, especially the bigger ones, have their own cultural policy or strategy focused on the cultural and creative sector.

Cultural policy is of course also shaped by civil society and initiatives in this field that have emerged over time in the CR. This sector has an influence on the transformation of the cultural policies of towns and also influences cultural policy at the state level. The biggest influence is evident in the changes in grants and other support systems in the field of culture and in the establishment of advisory bodies and more.

2.3 Governance system: Organisational Organigram



2.4 Background

1950-1960

After the Second World War, the territory of Czechoslovakia fell under Soviet influence, culture in the country was nationalized and culture was degraded to the state propaganda tool. The regime also intentionally isolated cultural activities from the West and all Czechoslovak democratic traditions, and attempted to define the principles of a new “socialist culture”.

1960-1970

The form of the communist regime kept changing during this period. The 1960s meant easing in society and culture and international success of the arts². Liberalization in society experienced its peak in 1968 when it was violently suppressed by the Warsaw Pact invasion.

1970-1980

The regime was reinforced, again dubbed as normalization. The defining criterion of normalization culture was popularity and consumerism in TV pop culture under the supervision of the state, censorship, and persecution of unwanted artists and cultural workers.

1980-1990

The 1980s featured a gradual easing. The year 1989 brought involvement of artists in signing Václav Havel’s petition Several Sentences and the Velvet Revolution in November 1989. The democratic transformation of culture had started.

1990-2000

All state institutions underwent mass privatisation and denationalisation. In 1993, the Czech and Slovak Federative Republic split into two independent states. The first strategic document in culture was elaborated in 1996³ and in 1999 the first *Strategy of Effective Cultural Support* was adopted.

2000-2010

In 2001, the *Cultural Policy in the CR 2001-2005* was approved. Provisions connected mostly with the new membership of the CR in the EU and the reform of public administration. The *National Cultural Policy 2009-2014* was approved in

² For instance, *Czechoslovak New Wave* – the success of Czechoslovak scriptwriters and film directors who started their career in the 1960s

³ The *White Book* – a study that clarified the relation of the state to culture and presented examples of cultural policies from other European countries

2008, which focused on understanding culture as a discipline in which it is useful to invest time, energy, and human and financial potential.

2010-2020

In 2013 another document was approved – the Updated State Cultural Policy for 2013 and 2014 with a View to the Years 2015 to 2020, and in 2015 the State Cultural Policy for 2015-2020.

3. Current cultural affairs

3.1 Key developments

The pandemic crisis and several lockdowns that have impacted the creative sector since March 2020 have significantly influenced a change in the perception of culture, thus political culture in the CR as well. With the onset of Covid-19 in 2020, the hidden problems in culture started to appear, as they remained unsolved since the 1990s in the independent cultural sector. The MC primarily took care of its cultural organisations and non-profit sector through subsidy programmes. The onset of the pandemic immediately proved that the cultural ecosystem is much larger and there are many associated jobs that helped culture to function. There is also a big sector of commercial art that has never asked for any public support. It also proved that the most affected entities are not cultural organisations, but individual artists who are self-employed and participate in both non-commercial and commercial sectors, or work in public institutions and small NGOs. They combine their jobs and income.

The period from the onset of the pandemic has seen many fundamental changes. The first one was undoubtedly the emergence of other professional associations that tried to unite their members from various parts of the sector, fields, and genres. For example, the Czech Music Community was founded to make a connection between non-classical and classical music and technical jobs for the first time since 1990. The second fundamental change was the fact that the MC has begun to discuss matters with professional associations and platforms and has set a regular system of consultation of documents that are prepared at the state level and associated with healthcare measures at cultural events or compensation for artists and cultural workers.

The discussions also featured the newly prepared cultural policy, which also reflects the needs of the sector that arose from the crisis. The Minister draws at-

tention to the “misunderstanding caused by the dual nature of culture” (commercial and non-commercial) and he sees the main role of the state as providing widely accessible culture. The main topics are effective inter-ministerial cooperation, cooperation with local administrations on supporting regional culture, working on the definition of the Status of the Artist in the CR, as well as further development of networking, skills development and internationalization of Czech culture.

The strategic tasks and the presence of professional organisations and platforms in the preparation process have been demonstrated in the draft of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP) for the Czech Republic. Seven key initiatives regarding the parts dedicated to culture in the NRRP correspond with the main objectives of the State Cultural Policy.

3.2 Key themes

The main topics coincide with the new State Cultural Policy and the NRRP. These are:

- The Status of the Artist;
- Development of the cultural and creative sector in the regions;
- Digitalization of the cultural and creative sector;
- Modernization of cultural institutions with the emphasis on cultural heritage.

The main discussion concerns the expectations regarding the definition of the Status of the Artist. The discussion is rather extensive, from the definition of an artist and other cultural workers, their social security, copyright, removal of the legislative precarity of artists when compared to other jobs, to gender issues. As in other countries, culture has played an essential role in society's mental health in lockdowns. On the other hand, artists and other cultural workers who are self-employed (not employees) carried the biggest burden of social impact.

There has been a long discussion about access to culture. This aspect now extends to how to keep visitors after the pandemic crisis. This is also linked to the digitalization of cultural content that has sped up in the past two years and how to present cultural content.

Another topic is setting up new cooperation to develop cultural and creative industries in regions. The options for cooperative – joint funding of cultural organisations by the state, regions, and municipalities are still being discussed. The

limited cooperation among the state, regions, and municipalities has lowered the quality and accessibility of culture. There are more than 6 000 municipalities in the CR, which are associated with a rich cultural infrastructure that has been developing since the beginning of the last century. Many of them are, however, in a poor condition and have insufficient equipment.

There has also been a long discussion about creative education and using the arts in formal and informal education. The topic is depicted in the State Cultural Policy as part of active participation in culture and accessibility of culture, as well as improving social cohesion.

At the state institutions level, the topic of discussion is the transformation of institutions from state-funded organisations to public institutions in culture that should guarantee the independence of political decisions and greater flexibility in management.

3.3 *International Cultural Cooperation*

The Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Czech Centres are the main public actors in cultural cooperation and the promotion of Czech culture abroad.

In 2015, the Czech Government adopted the Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Czech Republic. One of the goals is to promote the good image of the CR within the international community. Considerable attention is devoted to the CR's branding and various forms of diplomacy including cultural diplomacy.

Other important actors include national organisations under the umbrella of the MC and non-governmental organisations, through which the majority of international cultural projects are implemented. These projects are supported by the state's grant programmes and grants from regional and local authorities, as well as through foreign cultural institutions and foundations or European funds.

The Czech Centres operate under the remit of the MFA. Their mission is to promote the Czech cultural scene on the international level and to strengthen the good reputation of the CR in the world.

The Arts and Theatre Institute (ATI) is an organisation founded by the MC to promote Czech theatre, dance, and music abroad, among its other roles. In 2017, an export music agency was set up under the ATI, SoundCzech, based on demands from the representatives of the music sector.

In 2017, another pro-export state agency in the field of literature was established: the Czech Literary Centre.

In the field of film, the Czech Film Centre has been very active in the area of promoting Czech cinematography abroad (it is a part of the State Cinematography Fund).

4. Cultural Institutions

4.1 Overview

Since the beginning of the 1990s, the sphere of culture has undergone two fundamental changes: the decentralization and the re-allocation of public responsibilities. The first period was about the privatization of cultural industries and selected cultural organisations, agencies or funds that had been subordinated to the state until 1990. The second period was linked to the territorial reform of public administration in the CR.

The MC established 82 state-funded organisations in 1998. By 2001, this number had decreased to 39. The majority of these organisations were libraries, museums, and galleries that were transferred to new regions and the state kept only those of national and international importance.

The state currently funds 31 organisations in the cultural sector, while other organisations are funded by regions and municipalities. Alongside these organisations, the cultural sector is also largely made up of networks of private cultural institutions and organisations or associations with various types of legal subjectivity that are more or less dependent on public support.

Private non-profit cultural institutions usually take the legal form of institutions, associations, public benefit organisations, foundations, endowment funds, and religious legal entities. The overall cultural infrastructure includes also cultural organisations oriented towards profit and other types of legal subjects such as public limited companies or limited liability companies. Nevertheless, other than the distinguishing feature of whether or not a given cultural organisation receives support from public financial resources, there are no clear rules that determine what is or is not a for-profit organisation.

The pandemic crisis has shown that the CR lacks exact data about the number of organisations that are not funded by public administration.

4.2 Data on selected public and private cultural institutions

Table 1: Cultural institutions, by sector and domain

Domain	Cultural Institution (Subdomain)	Public Sector		Private Sector	
		Number (2020)	Number (2015)	Number (2020)	Number (2015)
Cultural Heritage	Cultural heritage sites (recognised) ⁴	40 242	39 757	<i>n.a</i>	<i>n.a</i>
	Archaeological sites	<i>n.a</i>	<i>n.a</i>	<i>n.a</i>	<i>n.a</i>
Museums	Museum institutions	339	342	98	95
Archives	Archive institutions	52	<i>n.a</i>	11	<i>n.a</i>
Visual arts	Public art galleries / exhibition halls	96	97	148	196
Performing arts	Performance spaces for theatre	89	76	89	101
	Concert houses	41⁵	<i>n.a</i>	<i>n.a</i>	<i>n.a</i>
	Theatre companies	72 (2021)	<i>n.a.</i>	422 (2021)	<i>n.a</i>
	Dance, ballet companies and contemporary circus companies	9 (2021)	<i>n.a</i>	87 (2021)	<i>n.a</i>
	Symphonic orchestras	14	14	2	2
Libraries	Libraries	5307	5353	13	<i>n.a</i>
Audiovisual	Cinemas ⁶	1065	<i>n.a</i>	<i>n.a</i>	<i>n.a</i>
	Broadcasting organisations	20 (2021)	2 (2016)	297 (2021)	179 (2016)
Interdisciplinary	Socio-cultural centres / cultural houses	526	447	87	63
Others (please explain)	-	-	-	-	-

Sources: NIPOS, Basic Statistical Data on Culture 2020 and 2015; Database of the ATI <http://www.idu.cz>, IDU 2021; Annual reports of the Ministry of Culture for 2020 and 2015; Database of the accreditation archives at the Ministry of the Interior; Cinemas – Czech Film Fund. Sights – National Heritage Institute.

⁴ The National Heritage Institute does not have a list of the owners of the sites, so there is no way to determine whether the monument is owned by a public or private institution.

⁵ Concert houses – the main concert halls for classical music are a mixture of public and private entities.

⁶ Cinemas in the CR are not tracked according to the owner or operator but are differentiated as cinemas with continuous services, cinemas with occasional services, and outdoor cinemas (summer cinemas, mobile cinemas, and drive-in cinemas).

5. Cultural Funding

5.1 Overview

In the CR, culture is funded from public sources at three levels – the state, regions, and municipalities. The main supporters of culture are the regions and most towns, with Prague occupying first place. Each public administration level funds the directly managed organisations and administers grant programmes for cultural and artistic activities.

Since the economic crisis in 2008, public expenses for culture have been constantly increasing. The growth was disrupted by the pandemic crisis, which has affected public administration budgets as well as a drop in income from taxes, which had led to a reduction in public budgets for culture.

On the other hand, the period of the past two years in the pandemic has brought new support programmes for publicly funded cultural organisations, the independent sector, individual artists and cultural workers. The state has generated a set of programmes called Covid-Culture for the commercial cultural sector's entities and the self-employed, and programmes to make culture accessible online.

The drop in public budgets for culture should be balanced by the NRRP for the CR. One of the components of the NRRP plan No. 4 for Institutions on Regulations and Business Support as a Response to COVID-19 is the section on The Development of the Cultural and Creative Sector. The ministry responsible for this component is the MC which is expected to receive 289.81 million EUR⁷ (VAT excluded) for its agenda. Out of a total sum of allocations, 76.08 million EUR will be covered from national sources, with the remaining sum (213.73 million EUR) to be reimbursed from the Recovery and Resilience Facility of the EU. Details of calls provided by the MC and the implementation process were due to be set up by the end of 2021.

The private sector is a very important pillar of cultural support in the CR, although the current tax system in the CR is not especially supportive of philanthropy or patronage. The system favours sponsors over donors. The costs of promotion and advertising are tax deductible costs and sponsors can apply the full sum to their tax base. Patronage is not adequately dealt with in legislation in

⁷ 2021: 1 EUR = 25.500

the CR. Nevertheless, private support can be identified in a number of forms, including material support. Private foundations and endowment funds are important too as they support culture in the long run.

5.2 Public cultural expenditure by level of government

Table 2: Public cultural expenditure by level of government, in CZK and in EUR, 2020 and 2015

Level of government	Total cultural expenditure 2020			Total cultural expenditure 2015		
	in CZK*	in EUR⁸	% share of total	in CZK*	in EUR⁹	% share of total
State (central, federal)	13 475 226 778	509 575 965	42.53	7 574 990 494	277 645 072	37.24
Regional and local administration	18 185 145 094	688 668 870	57.47	12 764 603 887	467 859 248	62.76
TOTAL	31 660 371 872	1 198 244 835	100%	20 339 594 381	745 504 320	100%

Source: Ministry of Finance: *Monitor database*, 2021

Note: * At the date of expenditure

⁸ 2020: 1 EUR = 26.444

⁹ 2015: 1 EUR = 27.283

5.3. Public cultural expenditure per sector

Table 3: Public cultural expenditure at the level of state*: by sector, in national CZK and in EUR, 2020 and 2015

Field / Do- main	Total cultural expenditure 2020			Total cultural expenditure 2015		
	in CZK	in EUR¹⁰	% share of total	in CZK	in EUR*¹¹	% share of total
Cultural Heritage	4 376 956 126	165 517 929	32.48	3 295 478 234	12 078 8705	43.51
Visual Arts	93 580 973	3 538 836	0.70	47 070 508	1 725 269	0.62
Performing Arts	2 403 771 529	90 900 451	17.84	972 265 533	35 636 313	12.84
Music	729 682 111	27 593 485	5.42	353 139 774	12 943 583	4.66
Audiovisual and Multi- media	269 936 377	10 207 850	2.00	194 651 430	7 134 532	2.57
Books and Press	86 607 500	3 275 129	0.64	35 913 000	1 316 314	0.47
Libraries	2 733 074 762	103 353 304	20.28	1 058 195 324	38 785 886	13.97
Not covered by the above do- mains	2 781 617 400	105 188 981	20.64	1 618 276 691	59 314 470	21.36
TOTAL	13 475 226 778	509 575 965	100%	7 574 990 494	277 645 072	100%

Source: Ministry of Finance: *Databáze Monitor*, 2021

¹⁰ 2020: 1 EUR = 26. 444

¹¹ 2015: 1 EUR = 27.283

Table 4: Public cultural expenditure at the level of regions and municipalities: by sector, in CZK and in EUR, 2020 and 2015

Field / Domain	Total cultural expenditure 2020			Total cultural expenditure 2015		
	in CZK	in EUR¹²	% share of total	in CZK	in EUR*¹³	% share of total
Cultural Heritage	4 845 114 875	183 221 709	26.61	3 229 926 554	118 386 048	25.30
Visual Arts	80 118 956	3 029 759	0.44	41 547 352	1 522 829	0.33
Performing Arts	4 246 828 751	161 580 822	23.45	3 027 123 404	110 952 733	23.72
Music	1 082 732 498	40 944 354	5.95	640 092 199	23 461 210	5.02
Audiovisual and Multimedia	338 503 237	12 800 758	1.86	348 350 387	12 768 038	2.73
Books and Press	19 372 381	732 581	0.11	20 027 965	734 082	0.16
Libraries	4 204 502 567	158 996 467	23.08	2 532 497 362	92 823 273	19.83
Not covered by the above domains	3 367 971 829	127 362 420	18.50	2 925 038 664	107 211 035	22.91
TOTAL	18 185 145 094	688 668 870	100%	12 764 603 887	467 859 248	100%

Source: Ministry of Finance: *Databáze Monitor*, 2021

¹² 2020: 1 EUR = 26.444

¹³ 2015: 1 EUR = 27.283

6. Legislation on culture

6.1 Overview national cultural legislation

The Act on Establishing Ministries and other Central Administrative Bodies, dating from 1969, clarifies the responsibilities of the MC.

Regulations were created to apply to the field of culture in general, and not to focus specifically on one discipline, and were introduced under Act No. 203/2006 Coll. on Some Kinds of Cultural Support and Amendments to Related Regulations.

There is no specific legislation to which the formation of cultural policy is subject. Financing for cultural organisations and the procedure for business entities and individuals are defined by the budget rules of the Republic.

There is no specific legislation that defines what an artist is. This should be changed within the NRRP, which is one of the milestones of a legislative change implementing the status of an artist in the CR within three years (until the end of 2024).

Mechanisms focused on the support to culture from extra-budgetary sources are covered by Act No. 239/1992 Coll. on the State Cultural Fund of the Czech Republic (CR) and Act No. 496/2012 Coll., on Audio-Visual Works and Support for Cinematography and on the Amendment of Certain Legislation (Audio-Visual Acts), which stipulates the terms of operation of the State Cinematography Fund.

In May 2020 Act No. 247/2020 Coll. was implemented, on Certain Measures to Mitigate the Effects of the Coronavirus Pandemic Known as SARS CoV-2 on Cultural Events. The Act deals with the matter of vouchers for cultural events scheduled to be held up to the date of 31 October 2020. In conformity with the Act, customers should by 31 March 2021 request a voucher for a cancelled cultural event from the organiser and the organiser was required to issue the customer with a voucher to the value of at least equal to that of the admission price that has already been paid.

6.2 Overview international cultural legislation

In the Czech Republic, there are fundamental international legal instruments for culture, that have been adopted as far as the establishment of Czechoslovakia after WWI (e.g. the Berne Convention). As far as UNESCO conventions are con-

cerned, the recent one is the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions 2005, ratified in 2010. In 2009, the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage 2003 was adopted.

Cultural agreements of a governmental nature are made at the MC (agreements on cooperation in culture, education, science etc.) and form the basis of cooperation within the scope of culture and education. Bilateral presidential agreements are negotiated only as an exception. This is the case of the Agreement of the Joint Property, Management and Use of the Exhibition Pavilion in Venice negotiated with Slovakia.