

COMPENDIUM

CULTURAL POLICIES AND TRENDS IN EUROPE

COUNTRY PROFILE

ALBANIA

Last profile update: January 2011

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It is based on official and non-official sources addressing current cultural policy issues.

The opinions expressed in this profile are those of the author and are not official statements of the government or of the Compendium editors.

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ALBANIA¹

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¹ This profile was prepared and updated by Kastriot Cipi and Stefan Çapaliku, Observatory of Culture, Tirana.

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1. Historical perspective: cultural policies and instruments

Albania is one of the oldest countries on the Balkan Peninsula and is at the cross roads of Europe, the Balkans, the Mediterranean and Illyria. Over the past fifty years, it has been under communist rule which isolated the country from the rest of Europe until the early 1990s when the regime collapsed and independence was achieved. Prior to 1944, there was a rapid development or National Renaissance of Albanian art and culture. Following the Second World War, art and culture were under a "socialist realism" ideology whose main aim was to create the "New Socialist Man". Large-scale performances, sponsored by the state, glorified their ideology and the new man of the Labour Party.

During the communist regime, Albanian cultural life was completely centralised and controlled by the state. Cultural events were mostly organised in the capital Tirana, which was also home to the Opera and Ballet Theatre, Popular Theatre, the Hall of State Variety Show, the Concert Hall of the Palace of Culture, the Hall of the High Institute of Arts.

In spite of the guiding political ideology and severe lack of funding, artistic and social progress was made and cultural infrastructure built up. For example, in 1946, the first Albanian Art School was founded and artists created their first professional organisation – Albanian Writers' and Artists' League – in 1952. A few years later, in 1954, the first National Art Gallery was opened which was an important institution to promote and protect the artistic heritage of both native and foreign artists. Despite limits placed on artistic freedom and freedom of movement, many young artists completed their studies and produced a variety of monuments and other monumental works of paintings, sculptures, design, photographs or applied arts.

The collapse of communism in Eastern European countries throughout the early 1990s gave rise to the free movement of citizens, and thus enabled Albanian artists to have direct contact with the world of art outside Albania. Since then, Albanian culture was "exported". A new generation of artists had their works performed and distributed in different regions of the world. Works by Albanian composers were broadcast by foreign channels which gave them access to a mass international audience for the first time. Independent artists groups, orchestras, chamber music ensembles, pop music and folklore groups were founded and were given an opportunity to perform both inside and outside the country.

Such progress, however, has been more or less limited to favourable market conditions found in Tirana with little influence on other Albanians towns. The number of musical events varies in different parts of the country according to the interests of the audience and their traditions. Although there are many cultural groups and associations throughout Albania, only eight of them are recorded in the 1998 catalogue of the Albanian Foundation of Civil Society.

In 1991, the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports (MCYS) was decreed by the new President of the Republic whose aims was to bring the Albanian culture and sport institutions in line with European standards. A new cultural policy was created to help recover and develop Albanian cultural life and is based on the right of its citizens to participate in cultural life. In July 2000, a Guide to the cultural policy of the Albanian state was produced by the Ministry to set new goals for the country. Emphasis has been placed on national heritage as well as on the vital role of modernising Albanian society. Few pieces of legislation, have, however, been integrated as instruments in the day to day operations of the Ministry. After the political election in 2005, changes were made to the title and functions of the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport, which resulted in the formation of the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports.

2. General objectives and principles of cultural policy

2.1 Main features of the current cultural policy model

According to the Draft Strategy on Culture, approved by the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports (MTCYS), the national cultural policy in Albania is built on European standards and models. The underlying goal of such a cultural policy is to "bring down the walls that isolated Albania from the rest of the world, especially the West". Culture and the arts, in this sense, are considered to be tools that will help to bring democratic development to the country and re-assert its cultural identity within the region and as an integral part of European cultural identity. According to the same document, the implementation of the Strategy will increase the autonomy, competition and multi-dimensional role of arts and culture institutions in the country's civil, democratic and economic life.

However, Albania's cultural life remains highly concentrated within the capital Tirana, with almost every national organisation being based there and their trend is to avoid outreach projects and distribution, which results in poor cultural offering outside of the capital. For twenty years now, unique institutions like the National Opera and Ballet Theatre and the National Theatre (of Drama), notwithstanding their annual subsidies from MTCYS, operate like local institutions, giving performances only in Tirana. The situation is similar with independent theatre and music projects, festivals, shows and exhibitions. Exceptions occur in certain areas that have a tourism interest.

On the other hand, the process of decentralisation of decision-making and institutional autonomy has slowed down and in some cases has even gone backwards. On 18 November 2010, the parliament passed a new *Law on Arts and Culture* that will replace the *Law on Performing Arts* of 2006. The implementation of this Law will increase centralisation and will decrease competence in project selection as the new representatives of the Ministry of Finance will take the seats that now belong to artists in all boards of the national institutions.

Decentralisation is being regarded as a top priority of Albania's transition towards a market economy. First political steps towards democratically elected municipal officials have been accomplished. Although their budgets are limited, they have a large degree of autonomy. Local cultural commissions have been set up and are attached to local assemblies.

A *Law on the Organisation and Functions of Local Government* was adopted by the Parliament on 31 July 2000. The main principle of this Law is the autonomy of local government. The present status of local government in Albania and the process of decentralising power are affected by the political, economic, and social aspects of the transition, combined with historic, traditional, social and psychological factors. Before the transition, local governments had little political autonomy and high levels of social and economic responsibility. The central government body which controlled the activities of local government body was the Interior Ministry. The view that local government should have greater autonomy is gaining notable support.

Decentralisation of culture, as a part of the overall process in the public administration system, has not yet proved productive. City mayors seem more concerned with their authority over local cultural institutions rather than their performance. With the excuse of funding cuts in the central government and subsidies for the local administration, city councils have decreased their support for local arts and culture institutions, in some cases reducing aid to merely wages and salaries and operating costs.

2010 was a year of major friction between local and central government regarding subsidy distribution and taxation, with the government pushing for less local taxes and the local

authorities complaining of interference from the government in their rights. Arts and culture were caught in the middle of this clash and suffered both a lack of funding and a lack of co-ordination between the MTCYS and city councils.

2.2 National definition of culture

A national definition of culture does not exist. During the communist regime, culture was defined as national Albanian identity, political identity and was, of course, promoting a socialist culture. Nowadays, cultural identity still includes protection and promotion of the Albanian language and cultural life.

In an administrative sense, the state budget which is managed by the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports defines culture to include: cultural and arts institutions of creative and performing arts, cultural heritage, arts education and international cultural co-operation.

2.3 Cultural policy objectives

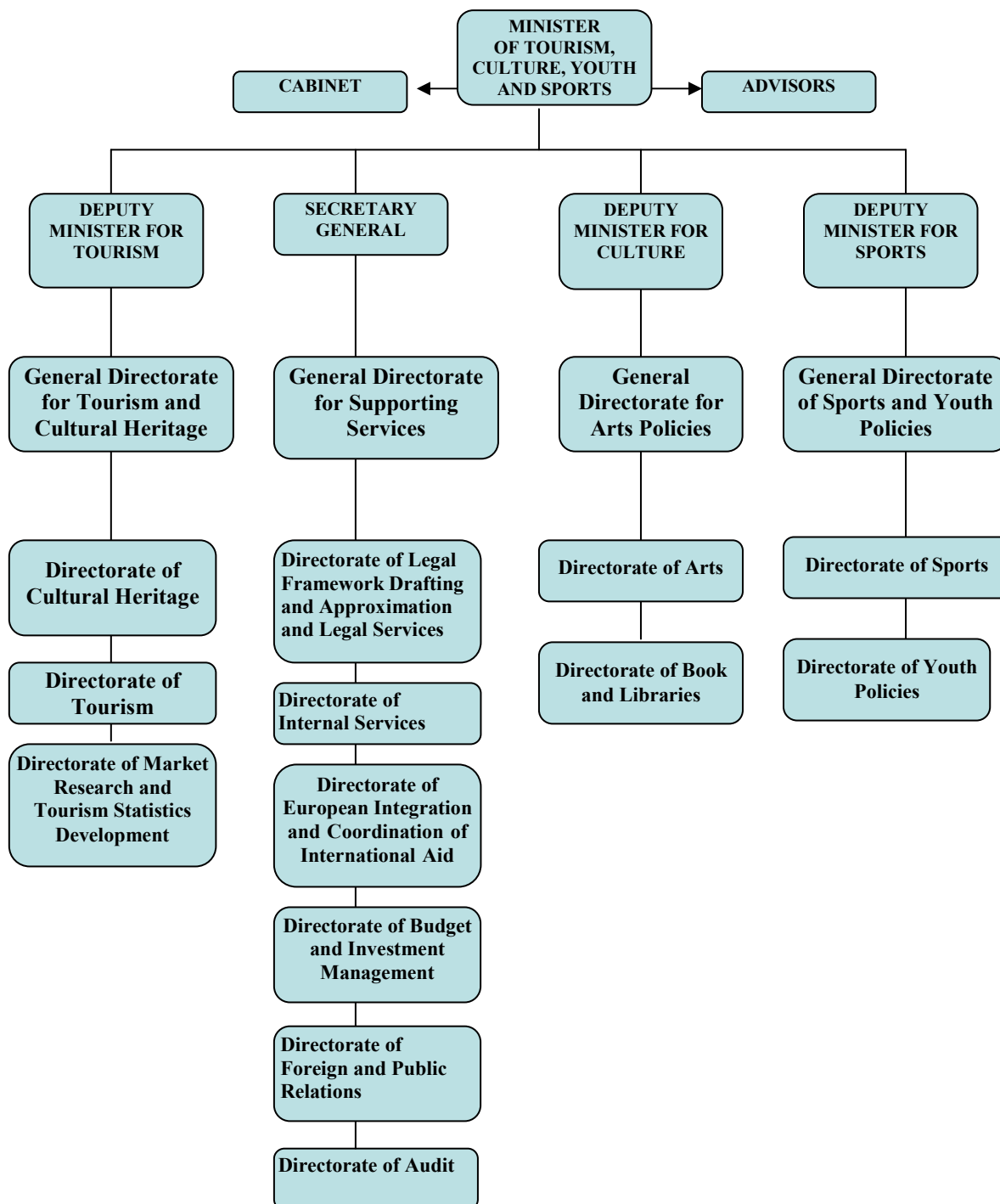
The cultural policy of the Ministry of Tourism Culture, Youth and Sports is to be seen in the framework of the efforts of the Albanian government towards the European integration of Albania. This is based on the principle that the cultural policy itself must become a key element of the general strategy of the development of Albania within the Balkans Stability Pact.

The recommendations of the Council of Europe are seen as a priority, especially in the book sector.

The cultural policy objectives set out by the Albanian governments are efforts to address the promotion of identity and diversity, support of creativity and participation in cultural life. Through a series of policy and financial instruments the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth & Sport aimed to interlink its own objectives by developing even innovative fiscal mechanisms to support culture and cultural heritage based on global best practices. Policy intervention initiatives are considered crucial to ensuring that the interdependent relationship between tourism, culture, youth activities and sport is developed and managed in a sustainable manner at the both national and local levels. Of the 37 conventions, protocols and agreements of a standard-setting nature issued by UNESCO, only 17 of these instruments have been ratified or accepted by the Albanian government. In this way the ratification and implementation of applicable international conventions for the protection of culture and cultural heritage is one of the most visible interventions that can be made.

3. Competence, decision-making and administration

3.1 Organisational structure (organigram)



Please note: At 12 December 2010, the Ministry's webpage is still under construction and the organisational chart was not available.

3.2 Overall description of the system

After the 2009 elections, there were a few changes in the apparatus of the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports. There are three Deputy Ministers now, covering Tourism, Culture and Sports. In addition, there are four General Directorates, as follows:

- Tourism and Cultural Heritage;
- Arts Policies;
- Sports and Youth Policies; and
- Support Services

Each of the first three **General Directorates** are directly responsible to the three **Deputy Ministers** - it is questionable whether there is any need for those Directorates as a General Directorate is a single officer role.

The **General Directorate of Support Services** reports directly to the Minister.

The **Minister's Cabinet** is responsible for the implementation of policies and strategies and organises institutional contacts for the Minister in the country and abroad.

The **Board of Advisers** to the Minister observes all activities of the Ministry and supports him / her through advice and suggestions.

The **Directorate of Cultural Heritage** was created in July 1998 to reflect the increasing importance of the sector in terms of policy making and programme development. After the Ministry was joined with the Ministry of Tourism and Public Works on 6 September 2005, the Directorate was renamed the **Directorate of Tourism and Cultural Heritage**. Its main objectives are:

- the protection of the cultural heritage, keeping in mind the modernisation and economic developments of the country, as well as of the tourism industry;
- to involve outside specialists who are distinguished for their work in this field;
- to raise awareness and inform citizens about legislation and policy developments in this field;
- to establish and strengthen international co-operation; and
- to find financing solutions.

The **General Directorate of Arts Policies** is responsible for selecting artistic projects to be supported by the Ministry which are in line with cultural policies and programmes. It also manages exchange programmes and co-operation projects abroad. Projects are selected by an ad hoc group appointed by the Minister of Culture and are approved by the minister. The Book sector was created in July 1998 to protect the universal and constitutional right of citizens to information and education through books, and to develop policies for book distribution and the promotion of reading. It aims to create a climate favourable to private initiatives in the book market, and it is also responsible for libraries.

The **Directorate of Youth Policies** was created in July 1998 to develop policies in the field of youth, with the special aim to promote the principles of an open, civil and democratic society among young people.

The **General Directorate of Supporting Services** is responsible for planning and monitoring the budget of the Ministry. The Personnel and Services Department develops and monitors procedures in the appointment of experts intended to co-operate with the different areas of the Ministry, organises and supervises the work of Ministry personnel and, in general, monitors how the laws and regulations of the government and of the Ministry are respected.

The **Directorate of Drafting and Approximating of Legislation and Juridical Services formerly the Department of Juridical Division and Copyright** supports and advises the work of the ministry in all legal questions and monitors the application of legislation. It also drafts and proposes appropriate laws and legal frameworks in the cultural field.

The **Directorate of Internal Audit** supervises the way in which the state budget is used in accordance with the forms and the rules foreseen in the legislation of the Republic of Albania.

3.3 Inter-ministerial or intergovernmental co-operation

The most important decision-making structure is the **Commission of Culture and Media** at the Albanian Parliament which is also important for inter-ministerial co-ordination. There is a structure within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs which has an important role in intergovernmental co-operation in the cultural field.

There are no specific inter-ministerial initiatives or structures with regard to intercultural dialogue. In 2005, the Albanian Ministry of Culture joined the newly formed Council of Ministers of Culture in South East Europe, but the agreement has produced no effects in the Albania so far.

3.4 International cultural co-operation

3.4.1 Overview of main structures and trends

The **Minister for Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports (MTCYS)** is responsible for international cultural cooperation. Except for cultural heritage and film production the Ministry has no strategy on international cultural co-operation.

There has been no significant change in international cultural co-operation in recent years. Unfortunately, culture itself was not a topic of the programme of the previous left-wing government and is not a topic of the current right-wing government's programme either. Even the "word" culture is missing in these documents. In this context, the Albanian government fails to fulfil obligations imposed by international agreements and conventions to which it adheres.

Intercultural projects are proposed and funded by international or foreign agencies.

3.4.2 Public actors and cultural diplomacy

Since the merger of the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Culture, there has been a decrease in the government's interest (and funding) in cultural activities in general. No significant efforts have been seen to establish co-operation between the Ministry of Tourism and Culture and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The latter has announced a major plan aimed at setting up a network of "Albanian Institutions" abroad, but to date this is only, and merely, a statement.

Unlike Albanian public institutions, foreign cultural agencies have been increasingly active in promoting their respective national and European cultural values in Albania. Especially, the Italian Institute and the Alliance Française have sponsored a wide range of activities, from translation and book publishing, to drama productions and live concerts. The Italian Institute is a promoter and major sponsor of "Allegretto Albania", a series of classical music concerts in major cities, while the Alliance Française organises the annual French Cultural Festival, a multi-disciplinary event.

A major actor in this field remains the Swiss Cultural Council – Pro Helvetia, which also supports projects with a national or regional profile. Recently, the British Council has been expanding its services, including library and home video rentals.

The major instruments used in international cultural relations are bi-lateral co-operation agreements. A good example in this matter is the 2002 agreement between Albania and Italy, which paved the way for two co-productions of feature films, the first ever with Albanian and Italian money.

Another agreement, between the Albanian and Italian ministries of education, has allowed many Albanian students to study arts and culture at Italian universities. In addition, opera and classical music institutions from Italy, France, Germany and Austria, have been offering training courses and internships for Albanian singers and musicians, thus helping many of them to start an international career abroad.

Due to a lack of interest in international cultural co-operation, the Albanian government provides no specific funding programmes for projects of this kind. However, the Ministry of Tourism and Culture provides limited and decreasing funding, benefiting events such as international drama and film festivals or classical music summer festivals.

Within the framework of regional cooperation, the Meeting of CEI Heads of Government held in Tirana on 23 November 2006 approved the *Plan of Action for 2007-2009*, which includes cultural cooperation. Since 1995, Albania is one of the members of this inter-regional initiative which aims to promote regional cooperation. The key elements of CEI cultural cooperation in the next years will be the development of projects related to intercultural dialogue and the preservation of cultural diversity in Central Europe, as well as the promotion of activities aiming at the conservation of cultural heritage, jointly with the transfer of know-how in cultural management. Additional activities aimed at advancing the ability of governments and civil society as a whole in the preparation, financing and implementation of cultural projects could be implemented especially in the following areas: support to cultural policies as a contribution to socio-economic development (cultural industries development; cultural tourism; sponsorship and donations to the arts) sponsoring cross-border cooperation in the field of arts, including the mobility of individuals and groups. Training programmes as well as seminars and workshops will be organised under the initiative of member countries with the aim of promoting various aspects of cultural dialogue, also aiming at the preservation of cultural diversity. Management of cultural institutions and the introduction of a modern administrative approach, including issues related to public subsidies, private sponsorship, ways and means of making culture especially attractive to the public, will be analysed in seminars and workshops organised by CEI member states, including Albania.

3.4.3 European / international actors and programmes

Albania is a full member of the Council of Europe and UNESCO, while, as a candidate country, it has been benefiting from EU programmes like Phare and CARDS.

Albania is also a country member of the Francophonie Community, benefiting from direct and indirect support from the French government.

The Albanian Parliament ratified the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions on 24 September 2006. The Ministry of Tourism and Culture will be in charge of monitoring the implementation of the Convention.

Few Albanian cultural and education institutions have affiliations with international, transnational or European organisations. Tirana Arts Academy is a member of ELIA, while there is a national centre of the Madrid-based Mediterranean Theatre Institute.

There is no partnership between Albania and the Nordic Council or the Anna Lindh Foundation Networks.

3.4.4 Direct professional co-operation

Trans-border exchanges with Serbia and Montenegro have been almost non-existent, due to political obstacles between the two countries. In recent years, Albania has tried to foster these exchanges with FYROM and Kosovo. With the latter, there has been distinguished progress, with cultural festivals, joint book fairs and exchange of concerts and drama tours. The current government has announced a plan to change an existing cultural centre into a theatre, with support from the Greek government, in the form of EUR 2.5 million to finance the project.

Drama, opera and ballet have received grants from mandated agencies such as the Alliance Française, the Italian Institute of Culture, the German Embassy, and the Austrian Embassy.

In the film industry, the French foundation Fond du Sud has played a key role, financing half of Albanian feature film productions.

3.4.5 Cross-border intercultural dialogue and co-operation

The Albanian government has no specific programmes to support cross-border intercultural dialogue and co-operation. The Ministry of Culture has signed bi-lateral agreements on cultural co-operation with its counterparts in Greece, FYROM and Kosovo. Except for Albania-Kosovo exchanges, these agreements have had a small impact.

In the third sector, there are some good examples of trans-national intercultural dialogue. The Albanian Centre of ITM (Mediterranean Institute of Theatre) organises an annual international drama festival in Butrint. The Albanian Section of ISCM (International Society of Contemporary Music) organises the annual New Chamber Music Festival and has recently launched its Centre for Balkan Music Documentation, the first project of this kind in Albania.

The annual International Tirana Film Festival of short films, animations and documentary films has a special focus on films from Albanian-speaking minorities in Kosovo, Macedonia and the Diaspora. The festival takes place every year in October and is organised by the Albanian Art Institute. All films receiving an award are screened on Albanian national TV. The web site of the Film Festival is available from: <http://www.tiranafilmfest.com>.

Butrint 2000 is an annual theatre festival that takes place on a historic site in the South-Albanian town of Butrinti, on the shore of Lake Butrint. The festival started in 2000 and has presented works by Albanian artists, as well as more than 50 companies coming from Greece, Italy, Macedonia, Bulgaria, Serbia and Montenegro, Poland, Romania, the Netherlands, UK, USA, France, Russia, Sweden etc. It is also a measure to promote cultural tourism in Albania, as Butrinti is only a short ferry ride away from the island of Corfu.

Generally the Albania government support certain trans-national activities of young people or youth groups through the Directory of Youth Policy Coordination attached to the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sport. Especially it provides fund for activities initiated by it according to the priorities defined at the National Youth Strategy and Plan of Action 2007-2013 approved by Albania government on 18 March 2007.

3.4.6 Other relevant issues

Despite the fact that Albania has a considerable Diaspora, there have been no efforts from the government to support the creation of cultural centres or other structures to support the preservation of language and cultural identity among Albanian's living abroad.

Neither the Ministry of Culture, nor the Ministry of Labour and Social Issues, have even drafted "culture in development" programmes. In such cases, Albania relies on international funding.

Albania is open to European and international cultural co-operation and efforts are being made to promote the most important achievements of national culture abroad. The Council of Europe has been the most important partner in international cultural collaboration during the last decade.

Some examples of international exhibitions and festivals in Albania are:

- the Onufri International Exhibition in Tirana (an annual exhibition for visual arts);
- the International Festival of Opera Singers in Tirana;
- the International Festival of Theatre in Butrinti (South of Albania);
- the International Festival of Experimental Theatre in Elbasan;
- the International Festival of Comic Theatre in Korca;
- the Art Biennale of Tirana;
- Tirana International Film Festival ; and
- International Poetry Festival "Poeteka" / Durres (First edition 2004).

The Tirana International Book Fair takes place every year in November with participants mainly from Greece, Italy, Macedonia, Montenegro, Kosovo, and France. Its main objective is to present the latest publications in Albania and translation from Albanian into other languages. The Book Fair is supported by the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports and by the Open Society Foundation for Albania – Soros.

Albanian artists are now represented at international festivals abroad (e.g. Venice Biennale for visual arts, Film Festival of Venice, International Festival of Theatre in Cairo, International Festival of Poetry in Struga, Macedonia). Albanian writers have been on board the Literature Express Europe 2000, a literary train that crossed Europe in the summer of 2000.

The lack of financial means strongly hampers Albanian cultural activities abroad, so that the import of foreign culture into Albania outweighs the export of Albanian culture.

Albania was involved in the Mosaic Programme of the Council of Europe, which helped in the process of formulating principles for national cultural strategies. This programme is also an example of regional cultural co-operation of South Eastern European countries. For the last five years, Albania has been involved in the programme "European Heritage Days" organised by the Council of Europe and the European Union. The ancient city of Butrinti has been added to the UNESCO World Heritage List.

Albania is becoming part of the Regional Programme for Cultural and Natural Heritage of Southeast Europe, a joint programme between the EU and the Council of Europe. It aims to enhance cooperation among nine countries of the region in the area of preservation and rehabilitation of cultural and natural heritage by promoting sustainable development. The programme is composed of 3 Strands (A, B, C) and the Albanian Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sport participates through the Institute of Cultural Monuments in the first two components. Strand A is related to Institutional Capacity Building (ICBP) and is focused on increasing management skills to run projects or design strategies and policies on further development of cultural heritage. Furthermore, Strand B implies the Integrated

Rehabilitation of Architectural and Archaeological Heritage (IRPP-SAAH), where the main aim is to fund the rescue of certain archaeological and architectural sites in Albania. This project is a joint initiative of the Council of Europe and the European Commission, through former president Romano Prodi in the framework of CULTURE 2000. Until now, the Ministry has fulfilled some of the requirements of the early stages in this project.

The Ministry has demonstrated its commitment to still continue with this heritage project even at the framework of EU Culture Programme 2007-2013 which has replaced the Culture 2000.

4. Current issues in cultural policy development and debate

4.1 Main cultural policy issues and priorities

The most important reforms in the field of culture took place after 1997. For the past 5 years, the main emphasis has been on developing legislation. The Albanian parliament has approved some important laws on cinema, theatres and libraries. The latter has been considered a cornerstone of cultural communication in Albania and, therefore, greater emphasis has been placed on the promotion of reading.

In preparation for the Council of Europe National Cultural Policy Review, the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport organised a special seminar on decentralisation in Tirana in March 2000, a topic which has been neglected in the overall cultural policy strategy. Other recent debates have focussed on the legal, political and economic aspects of multicultural societies, creativity and networking. On 23 November 2005, the Albanian government approved the Integrated Planning System (IPS), which means a series of functional principles that guarantee an effective implementing process for public policies. It contains two important processes such as mid-term and long-term strategic planning, the so – called National Strategy for Development and Integration (NSDI) and the Mid-Term Budgeting Programme. On 16 March 2006, The Committee for Strategic Planning, the high level decision-making authority on the IPS, decided to include all the sectoral and intra-sectoral strategies of different ministries in the planning. These strategies have to meet the EU financial framework 2007-2013 period in order to facilitate the National Plan for SAA (Stabilisation and Association Agreement) that the Albanian government signed with the EU on 12 June 2006. The SAA has replaced the previous Trade and Cooperation Agreement of 14 May 1992 which established the institutional relationship between Albania and European Union. SAA is part of the Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP) that EU adapted for the Western Balkans countries during its own European Summit of 29 May 1999 in Köln. In this framework, the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth & Sports is involved in the design and drafting of a series of strategies which are related to its own policy areas such as tourism, culture, youth and sport.

The draft Sectoral Strategy for Culture (2007-2013) is being prepared by a working group appointed by the Minister and is currently available for public consultation with all the stakeholders and groups of interest related to the field of arts and culture.

4.2 Specific policy issues and recent debates

4.2.1 Conceptual issues of policies for the arts

Public arts institutions in Albania totally rely on public subsidies, as they are not allowed by law to use box office revenues or other income, except for private sponsorship. Along with financial support comes also government control. Public officials, including department directors at MTCYS and the Parliamentary Commission on Education and Media (that deals with cultural issues also), claim they have the right to control decision-making in arts institutions, since they represent the general public and bear responsibility for better use of taxpayers' money. Independent arts organisations and individuals refer to *Article 58 of the Constitution* stating that: "Freedom of artistic creation and scientific research, placing in use, as well as profit from their results is guaranteed for all". They ask for total independence of bodies that decide on artistic programmes and individual projects, arguing that leaving the government controlled bodies the right to approve budgets is enough of a compromise. Examples of good practice include the National Film Centre and the "City of Arts" Programme of the Academy of Arts. In both cases, freely

elected bodies approve project grants. An example of an increasing centralisation is the new *Law on Arts and Culture*, of 18 November 2010. Though introduced as a replacement for the never implemented 2006 *Law on Performing Arts* (in turn a replacement of the also never implemented *Law on Theatre* of 2000), the new Law sets up rules of management for all arts institutions, from theatres to art galleries, from museums and festivals to local arts agencies. According to the new Law, the so called "artistic boards" will not only be appointed by the Minister of Tourism and Culture, but will also comprise representatives of the Ministry of Finance. Not a single member will represent artists.

4.2.2 Heritage issues and policies

Albania has been described as the last secret of Europe and its rich and diverse cultural heritage is undervalued within the country, much of it suppressed or neglected during the long years of isolation. The reality is very different: two current and three potential, UNESCO World Heritage Sites are complemented by extremely valuable intangible cultural heritage, such as iso-polyphonic singing traditions, distinctive textiles designs and exemplary inter-faith relations. Mosques, Muslim quarters, Orthodox and Catholic Churches, convents, Shia Tekke, Byzantine walls, Roman and other ancient vestiges all testify to the meeting of different peoples and civilisation, and a history of peaceable co-existence over nearly three millennia. For that reason the Albania government approved the Strategy and Action Plan for the Development of Tourism based on Cultural and Environmental Tourism on 17 December 2005. It aims to rediscover Albania's cultural and historical identity and to take action to better protect, manage and promote its national patrimony. It is based upon the UNESCO report on "Cultural Patrimony in South – Eastern Europe: Albania" (No:3 : May 2004). On the other hand the strategy will be accompanied by current interventions being taken by agencies in Albania such as UNDP's Support to Eco and Cultural Tourism Development Programme (2006-2009), UNESCO's Centre for Restoration of Monument in Tirana (June 2005 –November 2009) and other initiatives related to the further safeguarding and promotion of the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of Albania.

Soon after Gjirokastra (a city in South Albania) qualified for UNESCO's List of World Heritage, there was a public debate with a cultural and political background, on whether Gjirokastra deserved to qualify ahead of Berati, another ancient city. In fact, Berati is much older than Gjirokastra, at around 2 300 years. A Lobby group from Berati argued that Gjirokastra had political support from the government, but professionals from the National Institute of Monuments replied that Gjirokastra's file was much more impressive to the board and that Berati could try again, since there are no national quotas in this matter. Following the debate, the Ministry announced it would provide substantial funding to cultural projects taking place in historical sites, with both heritage and tourism interest. The most interesting development in this direction was a series of concerts of classical music, held in ancient castles, churches and archaeological sites, from Butrinti in the extreme South, to Shkodra in the far North.

The protection of cultural heritage in Albania is a priority of the Ministry of Culture Youth and Sport which shares responsibility for heritage with the Academy of Science. Within the Ministry, the Department of Cultural Heritage oversees the Institute of Monuments and the nine National Museums, and the Centre of Registration of Cultural Property. The Academy of Sciences has institutes relating to specific scientific fields including the Institute of Archaeology and the Institute of Popular Culture; the latter of which is mainly dealing with questions of folklore. The Academy of Science is partly responsible for the protection of the natural environment. The *Cultural Heritage Act No 9048* approved on 7/04/2003 is the most important legal framework which includes all the activities in relation to the preserving, promoting and managing the Albanian national heritage. On

27/07/2006 certain amendments were made by *Act No 9592*, which introduced the National Committee of National Heritage as an advisory body. The Committee is composed of a series of senior officials who are directly responsible for the promotion of cultural heritage in Albania. *Article 17* provides for the establishment of a National Council for Restorations which assumed the right to grant permission for any restoration of cultural heritage buildings or monuments. Taking into account the valuable experience and visible results of good management of the National Park of Butrinti, the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sport took the decision to establish seven other Archaeological Parks in Albania in Apollonia, Antigonea, Amantia, Shkodra, Bylis, Finiq and Orikum. These are spread around the country and aim to further promote the historical and cultural heritage and provide sustainable development for the local economies concerned.

Architectural Cultural Heritage protection and restoration in Albania is carried out by the following institutions:

- Institute of Cultural Monuments, under the responsibility of the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport; and
- regional branches or art studios under the auspicious of the Institute of Monuments. There are currently eight regional departments and workshops all over the country.

Following the destruction of several key built heritage sites in 1997, efforts have intensified in recent years to collect information about the state of protected buildings. Some of the major projects include the reconstruction of the administrative district in the centre of Tirana, restoration of the "Independence" building in Vlorë, urban restoration in Gjirokastër, and the Butrint archaeological project in the middle of a natural park (the only Albanian item on the UNESCO World Heritage list). The latter is receiving support from a host of partners including UNESCO, the European Union, the World Bank and the Butrint Foundation (which is an interesting example of national, intergovernmental and non-governmental co-operation in this field).

4.2.3 Cultural / creative industries: policies and programmes

There is no definition of the "cultural industries" in Albania. Given the production and consumption levels, one could not define any cultural activity in Albania as a "cultural industry". The only "cultural industry" is the piracy of film, drama and pop music!

Neither academic institutions, nor other institutions offer courses for culture industry professionals.

Internet

The first Internet connection in Albania was in 1995 and provided through a UNDP server which was installed for use by both governmental and non-governmental organisations. This collaboration provided university departments with email and Internet access. In 1997, the government started the Internet programme. At the beginning of 1999, over 500 terminals were estimated to be permanently on-line (access granted by the Telecom company) which also assists in providing independent newspapers and radio stations with web pages and email access. The Internet is of special importance for publishers as well as for researchers and students who could potentially participate in Open Distance Learning programmes.

Today, there are a dozen commercial Internet Service Providers (ISPs) in business and Albanian Telecom has provided all subscribers with dial-up access to the Internet. The government is putting pressure on the company to apply cheaper tariffs for this service. Some ISPs also offer access to cable TV. However, no progress can be reported as regards information society services. Although a *National Strategy on Information Society* was

approved on 27 June 2003, the legislation on electronic commerce, electronic signatures and conditional access has still to be adopted. Overall, preparations in the area of information society are at an early stage.

Recently, ISPs are offering mixed packages, with the most typical one being the 3 in 1 type: ADSL+2 cable for Internet, phone and digital TV, whether in partnership with any Albanian digital TV or not. Many internet users see it as a simple way to get a variety of TV programmes without having to buy and install a digital satellite receiver.

There are four mobile communication companies operating in Albania and all offer access to mobile internet. In November 2010, the government called for bids for the exclusive licence of 3G service, which was won by Vodafone Albania. The company paid EUR 31 million for the licence.

Film industry

The political and economic crisis in the early 90's seriously threatened the survival of Albanian cinema. The state-owned film studio "New Albania" was divided into 3 separate state companies and production fell dramatically to as little as 2 films per year, as state financing was no longer available. Alba Film Distribution went bankrupt and lost control over the network of cinemas. Dhimitër Anagnosti, who became Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports in 1992 and who is a renowned Albanian film director, appointed a working group for the compilation of a draft *Law on Cinema*, which was passed in 1996. This Law and the newly created government-run National Film Centre (NFC) finances film production in Albania. The NCC was created in 1997 to turn Albanian film production into a competitive system adapted to the free market economy.

The Centre grants project funding through three Boards, dedicated to feature films, animation and documentaries. In 2005, the *Law on Cinema* was amended to allow film artists' associations to elect all Board members. There are no members appointed by any government or parliamentary institution and the NFC Director, who is appointed by the Prime Minister, has no say in Board decisions. Every Board decision is final and includes the funding level for each project.

The purpose of the NFC is to support, through governmental financing, the creation of new Albanian films. Given the limited financial means for NFC, co-productions are the only alternative for Albanian cinema at the moment. The four artistic films realised these last years are co-productions with French, Italian, Russian, Hungarian and Polish companies, while the services offered to the foreign producers have been few and not very profitable. The documentaries (7-8 films in a year) are mainly co-productions with Albanian state TV.

Despite these activities, the state of the film industry in Albania may still be considered as critical. Its film production companies are financially weak and are fighting to find partners for their projects. The film industry, in general, suffers from outdated technology and an insufficient infrastructure for distribution. The number of cinemas has fallen from 65 in 1991 to 5 in 2010.

Today, there is only one distribution company, which runs all 5 remaining cinema theatres.

International Distribution for Albania (IDA sh.a) is currently the only film distribution company in Albania. The goal of IDA is to provide a network of cinemas which will provide quality entertainment. Till now IDA has established Cinemas Millennium 2 in Tirana, Cinema Millennium in Elbasan Korce, Sarandë and Shkodra. Actually they are working on the construction of Cinemas in Fier and Vlora. All these cinemas are very modern with the latest projection and sound equipment produced by Kinoton which is the best producer of cinema's equipment all over Europe, including Digital Dolby Surround Sound. The salon has been wrapped in the best acoustical material to ensure no distraction

from the outside world. Cinemas Millennium brings to Albanian public the biggest and newest titles from the famous studios. Additionally to this company is operating the Network of the Imperial Cinema. They are made up of two Imperial Cinema (I, II) situated inside the area of Sheraton Hotel & Towers in Tirana with a capacity of 100 seats and another summer cinema, so-called Imperial Cinema III placed in the open air amphitheatre of the Academy of Fine Arts at the capital of Albania. It has a capacity for about 500 seats. All three cinemas provide about 36 artistic movies per year according to the contracts signed with prominent film-making companies.

The list of international film festivals include TIFFF (Tirana International Film Festival, established in 2003) which offers competitive and non-competitive programmes for short films, animation and videos; Durrës International Film Summerfest (est. 2008), which offers specific programmes for international and Balkans feature films. 2010 marked the establishment of two new festivals: Anifest Rozafa in Shkodër (with programmes of animation and films for children) and the First Step International Film Festival in Tirana, dedicated to student and first time directors.

The last National Film Festival was held in 2006 in Tirana and sources from the National Film Centre say there is no need for another edition since the Durrës International Film Summerfest by default accepts all Albanian movies produced within the preceding year.

A new development is the introduction of private TV broadcasters in film production. They started with TV series, following the example of the state-owned TVSH. The launch of the second platform of digital television in 2008 (Tring TV, an affiliate of the national terrestrial Vizion Plus) was a major challenge to the first one, Digitalb (a brainchild and originally a subsidiary of Top Channel TV), first established in early 2005. Now the two are competing in genres like TV series, sitcom, TV drama, though Digitalb is still leading in short films and has already produced its first feature TV film.

Media

The Albanian press is still dominated by political conflicts and is more an extension of the political debate than of public opinion. Contrary to the lack of development in the print media, both radio and television broadcasting media have been growing very fast. In 1991 there was only one broadcaster, the state TVSH, with a daily programme of 4-5 hours. In 1993 and 1994, two private local broadcasters (TV Shijak and Alba TV) went on air and that triggered a debate on whether private stations should be allowed or banned, while there was no legal framework related to private broadcasting. A *Private Broadcasting Law* was issued in March 1997 which allows private radio stations to operate. A new draft *Broadcasting Law* was adopted in the spring of 1998 with a similar mission. Since then, the number of private TV broadcasters has been constantly rising. In the early 2000's TV Klan launched the first satellite platform, Sat Plus.

As of November 2010, the National Council for Radio and Television (NCRT), had licensed 2 national terrestrial TV broadcasters, another 69 local terrestrial broadcasters, 50 cable broadcasters and 2 satellite broadcasters, not including the national state-owned TVSH, which has recently opened a second channel, mainly dedicated to live sporting events and also operates as a satellite broadcaster. The NCRT has also licensed 2 national radio broadcasters and 48 local broadcasters, again not including the state-owned Radio Tirana 1 and 2 and International. These figures show much but not the whole picture. Since the Law applies only geographical criteria for the qualification of a given broadcaster, many operators apply for a local licence, so that they have to pay less, while they cover an area slightly smaller than 1/3 of country's territory, but serve more than 2/3 of the population. It is bizarre that Digitalb, the country's most powerful media operator, is not on the list. This digital platform offers 12 basic programmes, two additional packs of a dozen programmes each for film and sports, plus pay-per-view and four HD programmes.

In addition to some progress in the area of audiovisual policy, the National Council of Radio and Television (NCRT) and its human and financial resources remain limited given its tasks, particularly as regards fighting copyright piracy and monitoring broadcasters. NCRT has yet to Draft a Strategy for the Development of the Radio and Television Sector and an up-to-date plan to regulate analogue and digital frequencies. The alignment of the *Broadcasting Law* with the European Convention on Trans-frontier Television and the Television without Frontiers Directive remains to be achieved.

4.2.4 Cultural diversity and inclusion policies

Though the *Constitution* and other laws sanction the rights of ethnic and linguistic minorities, the Ministry of Culture (MTCYS) has not yet launched any initiative or programme to address specific minority groups. This also applies to other forms of positive discrimination. A reason for this could be also the lack of initiatives from minority groups.

Young people have received support through special programmes like the Festival of Young Theatre Directors and the Fund for Young Artists. The former is a series of drama productions involving directors less than 35 years of age and a significant presence of young actors and designers. The later is a support scheme for national institutions that employ young artists, especially newly graduates of the Academy of Arts.

Greeks, Macedonians, Vlachs and Roma are officially recognised cultural groups in Albania. Efforts are being made to add Muslim Bosnians to this list. Some media reports have stressed the fact that there is a growing community of Chinese immigrants.

However, there is no accurate data on their composition and size. The last census in Albania was in 1994, but matters like ethnicity, religion and language were not included.

Article 20 of the Albanian Constitution guarantees the rights of all ethnic minorities in Albania, including the right to preserve and develop their cultural, religious, ethnic and linguistic identity. However, the rights provided by the Albanian Constitution and several international agreements, have not yet translated into cultural policy issues. There is no specific law to support these minority groups, with regard to cultural identity.

Like all Albanian citizens, members of minority groups are free to acquire Albanian citizenship, to give it up or to hold dual citizenship.

Greeks have full minority status in South Albania, especially in the Gjirokastra and Saranda regions, where this community is concentrated. They have the right to education in their mother tongue, from elementary to high school level. The Greek community publish daily papers and have a share of programmes broadcast through public radio.

Since 1991, Greeks are represented in the Albanian Parliament, first by the Omonia Association and then by the Human Rights Union Party. The later has been a member of the left-wing coalition, led by the Socialist Party, in power until 2005, and is now a member of the right-wing coalition led by the Democratic Party (which came into power in 2005).

Many Greek politicians sit on city and county councils within the Gjirokastra and Saranda regions, as well as in the majority of local councils in most parts of the country.

To date, there are no arts programmes specifically targeted to cultural minorities living in Albania. While the Constitution guarantees their rights to, for example, publish literature in their mother tongues, there is no support systems to aid them to do so.

As regards cultural rights, Albania recognises three national minorities (Greek, Macedonian and Serbian-Montenegrin) and two ethno linguistic minorities (Aromanian and Roma). Generally, there prevails a climate of respect and tolerance regarding minority

groups. The UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions has now entered into force. Albania is endeavouring, within its budgetary limitations, to fulfil its commitments under the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. The government signed Memoranda of Understanding with local governments to promote the use of minority languages in relations with the administrative authorities and to display traditional place names in areas inhabited by persons belonging to national minorities. The Albanian Constitution provides that persons belonging to minorities have the right to be taught in their mother tongue in their curricula. Schools for members of the Greek and Macedonian minorities have significantly higher teacher-pupil ratios than the national average. On the other hand, the Ministry of Education and Science issued an instruction allowing Roma children to enrol in schools without being registered.

There are some radio and television operators that broadcast in minority languages, mainly Greek. Greek, Macedonian and Aromanian minorities have their own newspapers. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports supports the publication of a magazine focusing on the culture and social issues of the Roma and organises annual national festivals to promote the cultural heritage of all Albania's minorities. However it remains difficult to include subjects in some minority languages, particularly the Roma language in curricula. Albania has not signed the *European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages*. The number of Roma children in schools has not substantially increased and the literacy rate of the Roma population remains low. The *National Strategy for the Improvement of the Roma Living Conditions*, approved on 22 March 2005 by the Albanian government, is being implemented. However, Albania is not participating in the 2005-2015 Decade of Roma Inclusion and the implementation of the national Roma strategy is slow and fragmented. Overall, there has been some progress on cultural rights but further improvement is needed. Further actions are required to overcome barriers to minority education, particularly for the Roma minority.

4.2.5 Language issues and policies

According to the Constitution of the Republic of Albania, the official language is Albanian, an Indo-European language, a single branch in the Indo-European tree. The *Gheg* dialect is spoken in Northern Albania by approximately 1 300 000 people, in Kosovo by 1 750 000, and in Macedonia by 600 000. *Tosk* has been the basis for the official dialect of standard Albanian, recognised officially in 1972, and is spoken by 3 400 000 people. In recent years the *Ghegs* have also started to use standard Albanian.

Greek is the second major language, spoken by a Greek minority of 60 000 people in the South of Albania and is used in Greek schools. Macedonian is spoken by 30 000, Romanian in the *Vlach* dialect is spoken by 50 000 people.

There are currently no specific cultural policies or measures to support the use and promotion of minority languages through culture (e.g. publications, radio stations, support for films etc).

4.2.6 Media pluralism and content diversity

The law forbids shareholders to acquire more than 10% of a terrestrial broadcaster or to acquire a share of other broadcasters. In other words, a physical or juridical person may control no more than one terrestrial broadcaster. Recently, there has been a debate on whether the same rule should apply for digital terrestrial and digital satellite broadcasters.

While there is no official data regarding the share of imported media programmes in the domestic market, some surveys show that the Albanian media is heavily dependent on

imported programmes. Estimates show that they make up around 80% of terrestrial and 95% of digital broadcasts.

There are no specific training programmes for cultural journalists. Culture remains a less important issue in editorial policy and media structures. On the other hand, cultural journalists consider their job as an "obligatory service"; a stepping stone to promotion as a journalist covering other sectors, such as the economy or politics.

The most important development in the Albanian media has been to secure freedom of expression which is currently guaranteed by the Albanian Constitution.

A structural reform of the national broadcasting system has started and new national television channels, such as Klan, TVA, Top Channel, Vizion Plus have been created. A new challenging development was the introduction of digital terrestrial and digital satellite pay TV platforms.

In addition to the daily news, a cultural news report has been created. The most important magazine in the cultural field is Klan, Spekter. Some professional journals on culture are: the Albanian Universe of Books, Aleph, Mehr Licht.

Overall, Albania has made some progress on freedom of expression and media development which have been considered a key European Partnership priority for the Albanian government. Freedom of expression and of the press is constitutionally guaranteed in Albania, but many media outlets remain subject to political or economic interests. The *2006 Decision* to widen the composition of the National Council for Radio and Television (NCRT) and the Steering Committee of Albania Radio and Television, to include experts proposed by the parliamentary opposition, has been implemented. The NCRT signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Competition Authority on cooperation in promoting free competition in the electronic media field. Albania agreed to an Action Plan to develop new broadcasting legislation which involves consultation with stakeholders and the international community. On the other side, the *Labour Code* was amended to improve the status of journalists. The government initially proposed a *Draft Digital Broadcasting Act* without the agreed consultation, as an urgent anti-piracy measure. Further consultation led to a new Law which largely takes into account European Commission and Council of Europe advice. Work on comprehensive new broadcasting legislation needs to continue and intensify, using the process agreed with the Commission and the Council of Europe.

4.2.7 Intercultural dialogue: actors, strategies, programmes

Intercultural dialogue is not yet an issue of cultural policies in Albania. The Central Government, the Ministry of Culture or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs do not have intercultural dialogue identified as part of their agendas.

The main actor in this field used to be the Open Society Institute for Albania – Soros Foundation, which was due to close down its activities at the end of 2006. Founded in 1992, the Open Society Foundation for Albania (OSFA) has now entered a new phase in its development. It is not more a programme-based and grant-giving foundation but worked out a new plan of action to contribute to the democratisation and further integration of the country with the EU. In this framework the grant-giving Art & Culture Programme which operated from 1993-2004 is now closed. OSFA interacts with the Network of Open Society for Albania (NOSA) representing the membership of eight non profit organisations and provides a part of the funding for their activity. The only programme of the Foundation which is expected to continue is the Roma Programme, dedicated to civil and social integration of Roma communities in Albania.

Other NGOs, like the so-called "Friendship" Associations, aimed at fostering bi-lateral relations, do not really focus on intercultural dialogue. Their primary target remains the promotion of cultural and social values of a given country in Albania e.g. French values promoted via the Albanian-French Friendship Association.

4.2.8 Social cohesion and cultural policies

Unfortunately, social cohesion is not yet an issue of cultural policies and there are no plans or signs that it will become an issue in the near future.

4.2.9 Employment policies for the cultural sector

There are no specific strategies to stimulate employment in the cultural sector in Albania. In the early 1990s, there were a considerable number of artists who immigrated mainly to the neighbouring countries, which is of great concern for the development of the sector.

Table 1 provides an overview of the current number of local cultural institutions, their geographical distribution throughout the country and the number of employees.

Table 1: Local cultural institutions: geographic distribution and number of employees, 2005

Districts	Cultural centres	Libraries	Museums	Theatres	Archives	Cinemas	Total employees
Tirana	1	7	2	2	1	2	50
Berati	1	1	1	0	1	0	40
Bulqiza	1	1	0	0	0	0	5
Delvina	1	1	0	0	0	0	5
Devolli	1	0	0	0	0	0	4
Dibra	1	0	0	0	0	1	32
Durrësi	1	1	1	1	1	1	45
Elbasani	1	1	1	1	1	1	56
Fieri	1	1	1	1	1	1	44
Gramshi	1	1	0	1	0	0	10
Gjirokastra	1	1	1	1	1	0	45
Hasi	1	1	0	0	0	0	7
Kavaja	1	1	0	0	0	0	9
Kolonja	1	1	0	0	0	0	8
Korça	1	1	2	1	1	0	55
Kruja	1	1	2	1	0	0	9
Kuçova	1	0	0	0	0	1	4
Kukësi	1	1	0	0	0	0	25
Laçi	1	1	0	0	0	0	6
Lezha	1	1	0	0	0	0	16
Librazhdi	1	1	0	0	0	0	12
Lushnja	1	1	0	0	0	0	30
Malësia e Madhe	1	1	0	0	0	0	4
Mallakastra	1	1	0	0	0	0	3
Mati	1	1	0	0	0	0	11
Mirdita	1	1	0	0	0	0	7
Peqini	1	1	0	0	0	0	12
Përmeti	1	1	0	0	0	0	24
Pogradeci	1	1	0	0	0	0	8

Puka	1	1	0	0	0	0	7
Saranda	1	1	0	0	0	0	12
Skrapari	1	1	0	0	0	0	28
Shkodra	1	1	0	0	0	0	9
Tepelena	1	1	0	0	0	0	12
Tropoja	1	1	0	0	0	0	25
Vlora	1	1	0	0	0	0	3
Shijaku	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cërriku	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Patosi	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rrogozhina	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Leskoviku	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fushë Kruja	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Divjaka	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Memaliaj	1	0	0	0	0	0	0

Source: INSTAT, 2005.

As can be seen from the above table, employment in the cultural sector is well below the standards of other European countries. Many communities have no access to cultural services. One method of re-establishing the already devastated cultural infrastructure would be to use school environments and their simultaneous change into cultural centres, which might employ other people.

4.2.10 Gender equality and cultural policies

The State Committee on Equal Opportunities remains weak and the *Gender Equality Act* remains largely unimplemented. For that reason, further action is needed to facilitate the inclusion of women in the labour market and their participation in the decision – making process. Albania remains at an early stage in mainstreaming gender in employment as well as in other policies. There are no specific projects for women in the arts and media professions in Albania.

4.2.11 New technologies and digitalisation in the arts and culture

In 2008, the Albanian Government announced the launch of "Albania in the Internet Age"; a strategy intended to push the country towards higher standards in new media and information technology. The then Vice-Prime Minister was appointed as Minister of Innovation, Information Technology and Information. Since then there has been significant progress in Internet services and mobile communications, an increase in the number of Internet users of both home and mobile devices, as well as a relative decrease in service prices.

There have been occasional projects, but no special programmes or policies to promote the use of new technologies for cultural purposes. Projects include the digitalisation of National Library entry databases (now accessible also via the Web), the production of some audio CDs with traditional music and the country's oldest stills archive, the Marubi Phototheque.

Another ambitious project is the digitalisation of the Albanian Film Archive, in collaboration with Italy's Istituto Luce. Yet, the only way to stream or download any footage of either feature, animated or documentary films for viewing purposes only, is to search online for private sources. Sadly, pirates offer for free what you cannot buy, even if you wanted to, from the legal owner.

Unfortunately, other important institutions, like national museums and art galleries, have not yet launched their web-pages and have no plans to start digitalising their bodies of work.

The situation is pretty similar with e-books. Albanian education or cultural institutions and publishers do not offer e-books in any format.

4.3 Other relevant issues and debates

The most important reforms in the field of culture have taken place since 1991. In particular, during the last five years, major emphasis has been placed on the development of legislation in the sector. The Albanian Parliament has approved several important laws on copyright, cinema, theatre and libraries. The Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, for the first time, organised a workshop on decentralisation in Tirana in March 2000, an issue that had been neglected within the general strategy of cultural policies. Recent debates have focussed on the legal, political and economic aspects of creativity, particularly in relation to theatre. However, all these developments have been sporadic, partial and sector-based. Albania has not yet had an open, public, multi-dimensional and all-embracing debate on culture.

5. Main legal provisions in the cultural field

5.1 General legislation

5.1.1 Constitution

The current Albanian Constitution was approved by a referendum in 1998. With regard to culture, the following articles apply:

Article 8, paragraph 3, guarantees the right of Albanian citizens living abroad to preserve and develop their ties with their **national cultural inheritance** (heritage).

Article 58, paragraphs 1 and 2, sanctions the **freedom of artistic creation** and the right of creative artists to take profits from their **copyrighted** work.

Article 59, paragraph 1 G, provides support for the protection of the **national cultural heritage** and particular care for the **Albanian language**.

In accordance with these principles, the Parliament has passed the *Laws on Copyright* (first approved in 1992, amended in 2005), *Cinema* (1996 and 2005), *Cultural Heritage* (1994 and 2003), *Museums* (2005) etc.

5.1.2 Division of jurisdiction

The *Law on the Organisation and Operation of Local Governance* (2000) provides for a clear division in public authority responsibility. According to this Law, local authorities (city, county and district councils and their administrative bodies) operate along the principles of local autonomy. They have full control over all cultural institutions and infrastructures which are classified as "local" and fall under their respective jurisdiction, while the Central Government, via the Ministry of Tourism and Culture, has control over all institutions and infrastructures classified as "national", regardless of their location.

Local institutions should rely on subsidies provided by their respective governing authorities; however, they can apply for additional, usually project funding, from the Ministry of Tourism and Culture.

5.1.3 Allocation of public funds

The allocation of public funds for culture is primarily made under the *Law on the State Budget*. This Law sanctions the size and destination of subsidies from the Ministry of Tourism and Culture, national cultural funding agencies (like the National Film Centre), as well as national institutions controlled by the Ministry of Tourism and Culture (like the National Theatre).

The same Law sanctions the distribution of public subsidies to all local governing bodies, which in their turn, can augment these subsidies through self-earned revenues. There is a defined exclusive right of each individual local authority to provide funding for local cultural institutions.

The Ministry of Tourism and Culture, via its Directorates, gives project grants, including capital grants, to benefit state or private institutions of national or local relevance. These grants are not subject to public tendering laws and regulations.

The Minister is the only decision-making authority in the cultural sector and this is something many people disagree with. Critics argue that all Directorates must hire experts as project board members and that these boards must have full authority.

5.1.4 Social security frameworks

The institutional and regulatory framework in the area of labour legislation has been improved by the adoption of the *Labour Inspection Act No 9634 approved on 30 /10/2006* and the establishment of the Labour Inspectorate, which has concluded cooperation agreements with the General Tax Department and the National Employment Service. However, the limited capacity of the regional labour offices and the Labour Inspectorate hampers the effective implementation of legislation. There has been no progress in establishing a modern framework approximated to the EU legislation as regards labour law. Albania is progressively approximating legislation on working conditions and equal opportunities to European standards as regards gender equality. However, the State Committee on Equal Opportunities remains weak and the *Gender Equality Act* remains largely unimplemented. For that reason further action is required to facilitate the inclusion of women in the labour market and their participation in the decision-making process. Albania remains at an early stage in mainstreaming gender in employment as well as in other policies. In the area of social protection, minimum wages and pensions have been increased. Contributions to the social security and pensions systems have been reduced in order to combat informal employment and increase social insurance collection rates. The core functions of the Social Insurance Institute have not been consolidated and there are no properly defined procedures for pensions and social contributions. The 7-year strategy for Social Assistance and the Social Inclusion Strategy (2007-2013) have not yet been finalised.

Social security services are no longer an exclusive domain of the state-owned Institute of Social Security. A Law, introduced in 2004, allows Albanian and foreign private entities to invest and operate in this market. To date, there are two companies, one American and the other Albanian, which offer pension plans to Albanian citizens.

In 2005, there was a major controversy over the government's decision to raise the retirement age by five years. A coalition of Unions and advocacy groups asked for a referendum, filing a petition that was signed by more than 20 000 employees. The Constitutional Court, the country's highest court, rejected the request for a referendum. The retirement age will progressively increase by six months every year, until it reaches 65 for men and 60 for women; reaching these goals by 2012.

5.1.5 Tax laws

When the Parliament passed the first *Law on Sponsorship (Law no. 7892 of 1994)*, arts and culture communities were looking forward to seeing some cash flow from the business sector into arts and culture activities. The Law set a 10% margin of non-taxable income that private businesses could use to sponsor science, arts, culture and sports. There have been three amendments to that Law, in 1998, 2003 and 2007, with the later setting a lower margin of 5% (*Law no. 9807*). Despite these provisions, business sponsorship is very low, due to a high level of informality in the business sector in Albania. Companies would rather pay cash for services such as advertising, rather than provide "tax deductible donations".

Albania applies flat rates on both corporative and personal income tax and the related legal framework does not provide any tax deduction in favour of individual donations. As a result, private donations are almost non-existent, while business sponsorship is mainly oriented towards public events that get media, especially TV, coverage.

Arts and culture companies or individuals, as a rule, do not enjoy any tax relief. They all pay VAT, customs, corporate tax and tax on individual revenue. However, there are two exceptions: the VAT on book sales is zero and corporate tax does not apply for film production companies. Both changes took effect in 2006.

The introduction of a coherent tax system to increase state finances and combat tax evasion (estimated at 50%) is still the primary objective of tax policy. The relationship of trust between the citizen and the state, which is the basis for a functioning tax system, is still suffering from the disturbances caused by the "pyramid" financing collapse on savings and investment and consequently on gross domestic product and tax revenue. In September 1997, the government set up a tax system which introduced indirect taxes (on alcohol, tobacco and fuel) and entrusted a special office with the collection of taxes.

The application of a single VAT rate, which was raised from 12.5% to 20% in September 1997, is debatable especially from the point of view of the book market. According to the Association of Albanian Publishers, only 5 or 6 publishing houses pay their VAT regularly. This evasion is an indirect form of unfair competition affecting decisions on book prices. Duty on paper and other imported materials is also set at 20%. The cost of paper (and of production costs in general) appears to be comparatively higher than the European average. Albania has still not signed the Florence Accord, which stipulates that imports of cultural products should be tax exempt.

5.1.6 Labour laws

Relations between employers and employees are regulated by the *Code of Labour*, first approved in 1995 and amended in 1996 and 2004. The Law reflects the Constitutional principles, as well as basic principles of international conventions on labour, trade unions, prevention of discrimination etc. The Code is widely considered as a fair and effective Law.

The *Decision of Council of Ministers on the Minimum Salary at National Level* from 26 April 2006 provided the increase of such salary till to 18%. It was considered not compatible for a more flexible employment especially at the private cultural media institutions. The system of salaries for those working in the public sector is unified and regulated by the Law and several decisions of the Council of the Ministers. At the same time since 1995 existed the *Employment Promotion Act No 7995 20/09/1995* which is aimed to foster the employment of vulnerable groups. However, Albania has not yet adopted a culture sector approach to further stimulate job opportunities and make proper use of its growing labour force. As regards labour rights, Albanian legislation gives workers right to form trade unions. Since 1993 the Ministry of Justice approved the Autonomous Trade Union of the Artist, Writers and the Culture's Workers headed by Mr. Minella Kureta. But generally the employer's organisations are very weak due to the legacy of the trade unions movement in the country which is not so strong. On the other hand the main body for social dialogue is the National Council of Labour where the government, trade unions and employees are represented and it constitutes the proper authorities to set the criteria on the standardised collective bargaining agreements used when negotiating contracts only with state run cultural media institutions. In the meantime, Albania has established a state mediation network covering twelve districts to help solve collective labour disputes but there is not yet created a National Social and Economic Council. Albania's denial of the right to strike to some state employees is not in line with the *European Social Charter* but the artists are not included amongst these sectors. Meanwhile in Albania legislation there aren't yet specific provisions concerning the involvement of volunteers.

5.1.7 Copyright provisions

Protection of copyright was introduced in 1993, and in 1994 Albania signed the Berne Convention. The absence of copyright under the communist state resulted in some unusual cases; for example the best known and most translated Albanian writer abroad is Ismail Kadaré, but the ceding of rights to his works was handled by the state with no provision

for the payment of royalties to the author. Payment to authors is usually done on a lump sum basis and the figure is generally very low, the same applies to translators. Publishers themselves are the ones who declare how little they pay. As far as school text books are concerned, the authors are paid by the Ministry, based on a varying, and decreasing, percentage: 5% for the first edition, 4% for the second and so on. This system prevents the development of genuine professional figures, especially in the field of translation and it should be noted that about 50% of the annual production of general books consists of translations. Since 1991, as in the whole central-eastern European region, there have been a relatively high number of writers in exile whose works were censored by the previous regime.

In April 2005, the Parliament passed *Law no. 9380 on Copyright and other related rights* which abolished all previous parliament and government acts dating since 1992. The new Law offers better specifications on authors' rights for collective works and requires all parties to certify their contracts with the Albanian Copyright Office (ACO), which has gained authority for conflict resolution.

Musician's rights are handled by the "Albautor" Association and other international copyright organisations such as SACEM, SIAEI etc. There has been some progress in the area of intellectual property rights. As regards legislative development, Albania ratified the *Hague Agreement of 1960 on 19 February 2007* and ratified *1999 Geneva Act on 23 March 2000* on the international registration of industrial designs. The Copyright Office, provided for under the *Copyright and Related Rights Act No9380/28/05 2005*, has become operational with 12 staff. The office has established working relations with the two collecting societies operating in Albania, namely ALBAUTOR, which protects music copyrights and FMMA which protects the copyrights of audiovisual works. In April 2006, the National Council for Radio and Television (NCRT) signed a memorandum of understanding with the National Film Centre (NCC) aimed at fighting piracy and *Copyright Law*.

However, further strengthening of the capacity of the Copyright Office is still required. Piracy remains widespread and the enforcement of intellectual property rights is hampered by the lack of appropriate experience and qualifications of the Albanian courts in this field. The general level of knowledge about intellectual property rights and infringements remains poor and it is associated with the lack of a national strategy in this field. Under the *Interim Agreement* (entered in force on 1 December 2006, after Albania signed the Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the EU on 12 June 2006), Albania has made significant commitments in the area of intellectual property rights but the preparations in this field remain at early stage.

5.1.8 Data protection laws

There are no data protection laws in Albania. However, there has been some limited progress in this area. The Ministry of Justice is revising the *1999 Law on Protection of Personal Data* to bring it into line with the EU legislation and Council of Europe standards. However, an independent data protection supervisory authority with sufficient powers over the public and private sectors and sufficient resources is not yet in place. Preparations in the field of data protection are at an early stage in Albania.

5.1.9 Language laws

There are no special language laws in the Republic of Albania relating to the culture industries. For more information, see chapter 4.2.5.

5.1.10 Other areas of general legislation

Information is currently not available.

5.2 Legislation on culture

In 1998, the Council of Ministers approved of a list of institutions which fall under the responsibility of the municipalities. These include, for example, cultural centres, cultural houses, local libraries, local arts galleries, museums and cinemas. In 1993, the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports had a list of national institutions approved which fall under its remit.

The Ministry has embarked on a thorough and far-reaching legislative reform of legal frameworks for culture in Albania which is aimed at bringing their laws in line with current legislation in other European countries and in accordance with their Constitution.

There is no special legislation on the status of the artist in Albania.

Table 2: Legislation pertaining to cultural policy and cultural administration in Albania

Title	Year approved	Comments
<i>Law on Libraries</i>	2000	Legal base that supports and co-ordinates the activity of library services.
<i>Law on the Protection of Cultural Goods</i>	1994	Considered to be too general. Hopes are pinned to the adoption of a new law.
<i>Author's Rights</i>	1992	Law reviewed by the Parliament in 1995. To protect copyright of literary and artistic works.
<i>Cinema Act</i>	1996	Considered to be too general.
<i>Theatre Act</i> <i>Performing Arts' Act</i>	2000 2006	The <i>Theatre Act</i> was never implemented by the left-wing government. The current right-wing majority in the parliament abolished it and introduced a new draft which was passed on October 23, 2006. The new law is expected to take full effect in 2007.
<i>Law on Cultural Heritage</i>	2003	This Law provides for the declaration and the protection of the cultural heritage within the territory of the Republic of Albania. The Law comprises the value system for cultural heritage and provides rules for its protection and the duties and responsibilities of the bodies operating in this field.
<i>Law on Books</i>	2006	No comments
<i>Law on Youth</i>	In process	No comments
<i>Film Distribution Law</i>	Expected	No comments

5.3 Sector specific legislation

5.3.1 Visual and applied arts

There is no specific legislation covering the visual and applied arts in Albania.

See also chapter 5.3.2.

5.3.2 Performing arts and music

After two laws that were never implemented (*Law on Theatre* of 2000 and *Law on Performing Arts* of 2006, which abolished the latter), on 18 November 18, 2010, the Parliament passed a third Law that abolished the second Law of 2006. *Law no. 10352, on Arts and Culture*, will now cover performing arts, music and circus. Though it has no specific provisions on fine arts, museums and galleries and book publishing, it will impact those areas too, since almost all art projects that were eligible for grants from the Ministry of Tourism and Culture will now have to apply to the National Centre of Arts (NCA). Some controversy was raised as critics and sceptics said the new National Centre of Arts will have a very limited budget, since the Ministry will simply cut off a part of its budget and transfer it to the new institution. Others doubt the Ministry will ever implement the new Law, since it did not implement the previous ones. Another hot topic was the composition of NCA boards. Critics say it is unconstitutional and undemocratic to have boards fully appointed by the Minister of Culture. They claim the democratically elected boards of the National Film Centre should have been considered as good practice, set by the *Law on Cinema* of 1996.

However, the Law requires the establishment of a new national theatre, namely the National Comedy Theatre that will put and end to the monopoly of the National Theatre.

5.3.3 Cultural heritage

The *Cultural Heritage Act No 9048, approved on 7/04/2003*, provides the most important legal framework for all the activities in relation to preserving, promoting and managing the Albanian national heritage. On 27/07/2006, certain amendments were made by *Act No 9592*, which introduced the National Committee of National Heritage as an advisory body. This Committee is composed of a series of senior officials who are directly responsible for the promotion of cultural heritage in Albania. *Article 17* provides for the establishment of a National Council for Restoration, which controls permission for any interventions to cultural heritage buildings or monuments. Amongst others it aims to solve some important issues in the sector, for example:

- to regulate the institutional and administrative co-operation between authorities that are responsible for cultural heritage, urbanisation and the natural ecosystem;
- to define the relationship between the state and the individual in the administration of cultural monuments under private ownership;
- to introduce new methods of protecting and restoring cultural heritage, which need to be reformulated in accordance with experiences in West European countries;
- to define the measures against illegal trade in the realm of cultural heritage;
- to clarify the responsibilities of the local authorities in the protection of cultural heritage; and
- to resolve the questions concerning the rights of individuals relating to ownership of land and buildings that are recognised as immovable heritage assets and in relation to moveable heritage objects.

Since the collapse of the old regime, owners of buildings (private persons, religious groups) can reclaim possession of their property. A Commission for the Restitution of

Properties to deal with this question was established in 1994. According to the current legislation, the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports either keeps the private buildings and pays an appropriate rent to the proprietors or it dispossesses the proprietors.

Administrative responsibilities for the built heritage and cultural environment have yet to be allocated between state, regional and municipal authorities. On the other hand, *Museum Act No 9386, approved on 04/05/2005*, aimed to create the necessary legal framework to support the local and national networks of museums in Albania. *Article 5* created the State Committee for Museums as an advisory and decision-making structure, which plays an important role in defining the policies and rules on museum management. On 23 November 2005, the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports launched a Document entitled "Towards a Strategy of Cultural and Ecological Tourism Development". It was followed on 17 December 2005 by the Strategy and Plan of Action for Cultural and Environmental Tourism Development. Within this framework, cultural heritage is seen as the main attraction and is expected to receive a stronger funding commitment by the government for the archaeological and architectural sites of Albania.

5.3.4 Literature and libraries

A *Law on the Compulsory Donation of Books* was approved in 1992. The Law provides a legal basis that supports and co-ordinates the activities of libraries. Publishers are obliged to deposit five copies of each of their publications at the National Library.

The development of libraries in Albania must be widely based on the Constitutional right of the citizens to have free access to information (*Article 23 of the Constitution*), also reformulating the rights of users in compliance with the International Convention on Human Rights.

Library Act No 8576, approved on 3/02/2000, provides the legislative and the institutional framework relating to the funding and management of public libraries in Albania. It has been perceived as a unique Law in the whole national system of libraries; the scope of its operation is broad and comprehensive. The Law provides for the functioning of libraries as a unique national network and also considers them to be an integral part of the national system of information.

The Law recognises the particular responsibility and role of the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports to provide strategies and policies for the development of the national system of libraries, regardless of which other authority or agency is responsible for them.

According to *Library Act No 8576 03/02/2000, Article 14*, amended on the *08 April 2004* by the *Act No 9217, Article 5*, provides for the establishment of the National Council of Libraries as the advisory body to the Minister. It provides advice and recommendations related to the training of librarians, infrastructure needs of public libraries, as well as setting the norms and rules regarding the standardisation of library services in Albania. The National Council of Libraries assists the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports to draft and implement strategies and policies, as well as to follow the activities of the libraries nationally. The Council consists of representatives from all levels of the national system or network of libraries.

Special legal provision is targeted at public libraries in particular, which considers them to be important local centres, placing a wide range of knowledge and information at the disposal of the users, so that citizens can exercise their democratic rights and play an active role in society.

The Law also guarantees fair relations between the centralised government system and the autonomy of public libraries, setting concrete obligations on the governing bodies of both central and local government.

Special attention is paid to the legal regulation of the activity and the status of the National Library as the major domestic institution in this field. On 30 May 2007, the Draft Strategy and Action Plan for Public Library Development was presented at the National Council of the Libraries. The strategy takes an important step forward in this field and has to be supported by the necessary legal framework and the establishment of a National Registry for Libraries.

In this framework, *Book Act No 9616 approved on 27 September 2006* is another effort to institutionalise and set the rules for the publishing industry which had a fast growth especially after the 1990s. The National Council for Book and Reading Promotion is an advisory structure introduced by *Article 8 & 9* and refers to the possibility of more policy commitment towards book publishing, distribution and reading. The establishment of the Register of Publishers, which is provided by this Law, is a step towards formalising this market. Within this framework, publishers are enforced to deposit all contracts for publishing, editing, translation and distribution of books at the Albanian Office for Copyright which was created by *Copyright Act No 9380/ 28/04/2005*. The National Fund for Books provides an opportunity for different authors, writers or editors to be supported in their publishing activities.

Meanwhile there isn't yet any specific law on the phonographic works. Any issues related to this sector is covered by the *Archives Act No 9154 06/11/2003* and partially by the *Copyright Act No9380 28/04/2005*.

It was only after 1991 that independent companies were allowed to open. Prior to 1991, in the field of publishing for example, there were three state publishers which controlled the entire book market. To date, it has been very difficult for independent companies to operate according to market criteria. The new publishing houses, for example, were set up by people who had been working in the state industry and were not able to adjust to market conditions. The book sector still functions mainly through funding from NGOs or Foundations (Soros, Fan Noli Foundation).

5.3.5 Architecture and spatial planning

After three years of consultations with EU experts, the Ministry of Public Works and Transportation submitted a draft *Law on Territorial Planning* that was passed by the Parliament on 23 April 2009 (*Law no. 10119*). The new Law came into force in full only on 1 September 1 2010, with the abolishment of *Law no. 8405 of 1998 on Urban Planning*. The newly formed National Territorial Planning Agency (NTPA) is now in charge of drafting policies and rules for better administration of the territory and the renamed National Territory Council (NTC) will be the decision-making body responsible for enacting the national planning instruments, in line with the stipulations contained in this Law.

It is not clear yet whether the full implementation of the new Law will improve the planning situation. Territory Councils, whether the National one chaired by the Prime Minister, or the local ones chaired by respective city mayors, have been regarded by the general public as highly politicised and corrupt institutions. In 20 years of political transition following the collapse of communism in 1990, construction has constantly been the fastest growing industry and the most lucrative business in Albania. The lack of urban and spatial planning has contributed to what is considered now an "urban massacre" especially in Tirana, the Adriatic and Ionian coastline, as well as other major cities. Many experts say the damage is irreversible, due to extremely high costs of any restoration attempts.

5.3.6 Film, video and photography

The *Cinematography Act No 8096*, approved on 21/03/1996, was a challenge to the existing system of the state-owned film industry, and encouraged prospects for the development of this industry in Albania. The Law provides that one per cent of the income resulting from the selling of tickets must be invested to support Albanian films produced by the National Centre of Cinematography (NCC). Film producers are also expected to direct twenty per cent of the income which they gain from selling films to cinemas or TV companies to the NCC. This commitment is not always realised by the film producers due to certain reasons. Mainly it is related to the lack of well organised and operational film distribution network which create a lot of obstacles for the producers to generate the necessary incomes and then transfer 20 % of them to the NCC.

The *Cinema Law* was passed in 1997. The Law was a challenge to the existing system of a state-owned film industry and it opened up new prospects for the industry. The Law stipulates that 1% of the income derived from ticket sales is to be reinvested in new Albanian films produced by the National Centre of Cinema (NCC). Film producers are also expected to direct 20% of the revenue they earn from the sale of their films to cinema houses or television companies to the NCC.

A new *Law on Film Distribution* is expected.

5.3.7 Mass media

The most important development in the Albanian media has been to secure freedom of expression which is currently guaranteed by the Albanian Constitution.

A structural reform of the national broadcasting system has started and new national television channels, such as Klan, TVA, have been created. In addition to the daily news, they have created a cultural news report. The most important magazine in the cultural field is KULT. Some professional journals on culture are: Albanian Universe of Book, Aleph, Mehr Licht.

The National Council of Televisions controls the TV sector and provides television licences. There are currently no quotas for national or minority programming.

5.3.8 Other areas of culture specific legislation

Information is currently not available.

6. Financing of culture

6.1 Short overview

The state budget for the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports amounts to 1 % of the entire state budget, which is largely derived from foreign sources. From 1991 to 1994, foreign investments were 14 times greater than domestic resources. In 1996, there was a reduction in foreign funding and an increase in internal sources, until 1997, when national funding was cut in half. However, this time, foreign investment did not rise.

The main multilateral donors in Albania are the European Union and the World Bank, while the largest bilateral donors have been (until 1998): Italy, 14%; USA, 10% and Germany, 10%. During the Kosovo crisis in 1999, 32 cultural projects and different restoration projects of institutions were financed with a total 1 525 854 USD. The Soros Foundation has also provided funding for the arts and culture in Albania via the Open Society Foundation.

The 2011 budget of the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports is 3 354 104 000 ALL, approximately EUR 24.1 million, or over 29% higher than the 2010 budget (2 594 851 000 ALL or EUR 19.2 million). Culture expenditure accounts for 2 178 583 000 ALL, or EUR 15.7 million, an increase of 35% over 2010 expenditure (1 603 000 000 ALL or EUR 11.8 million). In other terms, arts and culture make up to 0.53% of total central government expenditure. Experts are appointed by the Minister to advice on the allocation of artistic project grants.

6.2 Public cultural expenditure

6.2.1 Aggregated indicators

Information is currently not available.

6.2.2 Public cultural expenditure broken down by level of government

Table 3: Public cultural expenditure: by level of government, in ALL, 2007

Central / state level	Expenditure	% share of total
Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports	2 651 000 000	100%
<i>Staff (salaries, social security)</i>	<i>725 000 000</i>	
<i>Operating expenses (including project financing)</i>	<i>539 000 000</i>	
<i>Investments</i>	<i>1 387 000 000</i>	
<i>Investment from the state to the municipalities</i>	-	0%
Total	2 651 000 000	100%

Source: Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports, 2007.

There are three levels of government in Albania: central (the government), regional (district councils) and local (city and town councils, otherwise known as municipalities). Considering their legal authority and financial means, district councils (12 in total) are the weakest and the poorest of all three to the extent that most citizens are not aware of their existence. Given the lack of information from second and third level authorities, it is quite impossible to compile a figure on public cultural expenditure. Only a handful of city councils publish their budgets and, believe it or not, Tirana, the capital and biggest city, with at least one fifth of the population, is not one of them.

6.2.3 Sector breakdown

Table 4: State cultural expenditure: sector breakdown, in ALL, 2007

Field / Domain / Sub-domain	Expenditure figures	% share of total
Cultural Heritage: Monuments, Museums, Libraries	439 210 000	16.6
National Arts Institutions: National Opera, Art Gallery, National Theatre, etc	1 634 250 000	61.6
Ministry	129 000 000	4.9
Sports	244 540 000	9.2
Tourism	69 000 000	2.6
Special artistic projects	135 000 000	5.1
Total	2 651 000 000	100.0

Source: Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, 2007.

6.3 Trends and indicators for private cultural financing

There are no data for private funding of the arts and culture.

7. Public institutions in cultural infrastructure

7.1 Cultural infrastructure: tendencies & strategies

Albania's cultural infrastructure in 1990 comprised:

Film

- "New Albania" Film Studio, with separate divisions and production capability for 14 feature films, 40 documentaries and 15 animated shorts;
- Central Film Archive; and
- Film and Book Distribution Enterprise, with 65 cinema theatres (about 15 000 urban inhabitants per screen), 400 mobile cine-projectors and a network of more than 100 libraries and 100 book shops.

Performing Arts

- national repertory companies in Tirana: National Theatre (530 seats) and Opera and Ballet Theatre (830 seats);
- one national institution of higher education in the arts: Academy of Arts, with a theatre of 624 seats, a network of 7 conservatories and a ballet school;
- one major events' centre: Palace of Congress (2300 seats);
- a major multi-art centre: Palace of Culture, a complex comprising the Opera and Ballet Theatre, the National Library as well as two stages (200 and 300 seats), a hall for events and exhibitions and a number of other premises for bars, recreation, art classes etc. Similar but smaller centres in all 26 district centres;
- one children's cultural centre, a complex of recreation areas, sports fields, studios, classrooms and a multi-use theatre of 400 seats;
- one student's multi-arts centre, Student Palace, with a multi-use theatre of 400 seats, located within Tirana University Campus; and
- 9 regional repertory theatres (with separate companies for drama, music hall and puppet theatre), plus 3 more music hall companies and 6 more puppet theatre companies performing at their own theatres and an additional 24 playhouses, owned by the trade-unions.

Fine Arts and Museums

- a dozen national museums of history, natural sciences, medieval art, ancient culture etc;
- around two dozen art galleries; and
- soon after the fall of Communism, the so-called Pyramid, a huge concrete venue built as a tribute museum to the dictator Enver Hoxha in 1988, was converted into the International Culture Centre, offering a round hall for major events and a cinema theatre of 350 seats.

In 1992, the first non-communist government in Albania's history had neither money, nor ideas to develop the cultural infrastructure. The same year, the Film and Book Distribution Enterprise was closed down. All cinema theatres and libraries were left under the jurisdiction of municipalities (city councils); mobile cine-projectors disappeared, and book shops were privatised. Cinema theatres and bookshops soon lost their functions and many of them were even demolished.

During the 1990s, the only trend we saw was the hiring of all "vacant" spaces in cultural infrastructures to private businesses like restaurants, bars, gambling houses, discos etc. The same happened to the playhouses, trade-union theatres and many multi-art centres. Even in Tirana, the capital, there was a gambling house at one side of the National Theatre and a private TV studio at the other and theatre-goers had to enter the theatre through the parking area. The Palace of Culture lost both theatres and the rest of the spaces when it

was "modernised and converted into a cultural-trade centre". Almost all repertory theatres, galleries and museums rented out spaces to private bars and shops.

This trend reached its peak in 2002 when Tirana's Mayor Edi Rama proposed the demolition of the National Theatre and the building of a business complex on its 6 000 m² site. Eventually the plan started to fade when artists and other intellectuals submitted a petition to the Prime Minister Pandeli Majko, who in turn rejected Mr. Rama's plan. Since then, the cultural infrastructure is gaining more terrain versus private businesses. The government has been investing in infrastructure restoration and modernisation, in some cases with support from foreign donors. The Soros Foundation sponsored the construction of a black box theatre of 200 seats and recently a new open-air theatre with 500 seats opened within the Academy of Arts, while a UNOPS / PASSARP Programme sponsored the restoration of repertory theatres in three major cities: Shkodër, Durrës and Vlorë. In 2005, the National Theatre opened its second stage (200 seats) and the government announced it would make use of a EUR 2 million grant from the EU to convert the Pyramid, now "Pjeter Arbunori" International Centre of Culture, into the new home of the National Theatre. Restoration and modernisation works have taken place in almost all other theatres, galleries and museums.

In 2010, the government provoked another controversy, by announcing it will demolish the Pyramid to build the new Parliament Building on its site. Nine years after the contract was signed and five years after construction works had started, the theatre project was too far from completion. The government promised it will adopt the present House of the Parliament but that didn't help ease the concern, for that should be home to the National Comedy Theatre, a new institution the government has promised to establish in 2011.

In conclusion, we may say that if the 1990's were the decade of destruction, abuse and impoverishment of cultural infrastructure, while the 2000's were the decade of restoration. Up to date, no new venues were added to the country's cultural infrastructure since the fall of Communism.

7.2 Basic data about selected public institutions in the cultural sector

Table 5: Cultural institutions financed by public authorities, by domain

Domain	Cultural institutions (subdomains)	Number (Year)	Trend (++ to --)
Cultural heritage	Cultural heritage sites (recognised)	6	No change
	Museums (organisations)	5	
	Archives (of public authorities)	2	
Visual arts	public art galleries / exhibition halls	1	
	Art academies (or universities)	1	
Performing arts	Symphonic orchestras	2	
	Music schools	5	
	Music / theatre academies (or universities)	1	
	Dramatic theatre	1	
	Music theatres, opera houses	1	
	Dance and ballet companies	1	
Books and Libraries	Libraries	1	
Audiovisual	Broadcasting organisations	1	
Interdisciplinary	Socio-cultural centres / cultural houses	1	
Other (please explain)	Puppet and Children's Theatre	1	

Source: Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports, <http://www.mtkrs.gov.al/index.php>

Note: The above grid contains data on national institutions only.

The *National Film Centre* is a government agency providing financial support for 2-3 feature films, 5-6 documentaries and 3-4 animated short films per year, as well as domestic international film festivals. Annual budget is around EUR 850 000. All features are co-produced with foreign partners.

The *National Theatre*, est. 1947, is a state repertory theatre based in Tirana, with two stages (530 and 200 seats), a company of 33 actors, and a total staff of 72. The annual budget is around EUR 700 000. It produces 4-6 productions and gives around 100 performances annually, although it never tours.

The *National Opera and Ballet Theatre*, est. 1953, is a state repertory theatre based in Tirana, with one major stage (830 seats) for opera, and a symphony and ballet. It has one alternative space (which can seat up to 200) for chamber music and instrumental concerts. It also has a 60 member orchestra, 20 soloist singers, 40 choir singers, and 30 ballet dancers and a total staff 196. An additional ensemble of 60 folk musicians, dancers and singers are also involved. It produces an average of 2-3 operas, 1-2 ballets, 3-4 symphony concerts, plus a dozen other vocal and instrumental concerts each year. Except for the Folk Ensemble, the company never tours.

The *National Gallery of Arts* was est. 1946 and has a total exhibition space of 5 300 m². The main departments are Renaissance, Byzantine, Social-Realism, and Contemporary and the total number of works is 4 100. It has a library also, which is open to all, with an admission of 200 ALL (EUR 1.5) for regular visitors, and a 100 ALL (EUR 0.75) concessionary rate.

The *Academy of Arts* was est. in 1966, after the fusion of three separate schools - Music est.1962, Fine Arts est. 1959 and Performing Arts est.1959. Until 2009, this establishment was the country's unique higher education institution of arts. It has around 650 students, and around 200 professors.

The *National Library* was established in 1920 as a public institution located in Tirana. It has a total staff of 105, and 1 035 885 entries. New entries amount to 20 000 a year and admission is free. Tirana residents, older than 16, are able to visit the library, and non-residents may apply for short-term membership.

7.3 Status and partnerships of public cultural institutions

It is still debatable whether "public" is the proper term to describe Albanian cultural institutions. A few, especially in higher education, can now be considered public institutions, as they have a certain degree of autonomy. They are run by a freely elected senate, which in turn elects rectors and other high ranking officers. Other cultural institutions established by a specific Law also have some autonomy. The National Film Centre has specialised grant-making boards that are fully elected by a general assembly of six associations of film artists. The Academy of Sciences also has some autonomy.

This is not the case with other cultural institutions, like theatres, museums, art galleries, libraries and multi-art centres. They are "budgetary institutions", which is a poor literal translation from Albanian, meaning government agencies. All national cultural institutions have directors appointed by the prime minister at the proposal of the Minister of Culture. All directors of local cultural institutions are appointed by their respective city mayors. As a rule, the board members at any cultural institution are proposed by its respective director and appointed by either the Minister of Culture or the city mayor.

On the other hand, it is the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports, in accordance with the Ministry of Finance, that makes all major decisions on the financial management of national cultural institutions, including prices of goods and services, wages and salaries,

investment quota, development plans and even royalty fees paid to creative artists. This strategy has proven to be a total failure during the last 20 years, resulting in elevated costs of management, weak financial performance, lack of initiative and eagerness from management teams, unfair competition towards private initiatives and unfair staff and employment policies. Being unique in their field of activity, all national institutions do not fear competition and can pretend they are doing well, since no other institution can do more. Private organisations remain unable to compete with them, as they take little or no financial support from central or local government. The situation is not expected to change with the implementation of the new *Law on Arts and Culture*, as it requires no change in the legal status of all state cultural institutions.

It has become fashionable these days for national cultural institutions to seek membership in various international organisations and networks, but rather than a way of expanding their potential for high quality work and European integration, that is seen as a mere boost in public relations. The National Theatre, for example, has announced its affiliation to the European Convention of Theatre two years ago, but there have been no other follow-up initiatives. The National Film Centre, on the contrary, has been making use of its international alliances with Eurimages, European Film Promotion and SEE Cinema Network.

Local cultural institutions engage in "twining agreements" with other similar institutions abroad, but only a few, like local theatres in Vlora and Shkodra have in the past co-produced plays with their Italian partners.

Business partnerships are a new and still marginal reality. In 2007, the National Opera and Ballet Theatre signed the first sponsorship deal with Vodafone Albania and the National Theatre has in turn signed an agreement with the paid-TV provider Digitalb.

8. Promoting creativity and participation

8.1 Support to artists and other creative workers

8.1.1 Overview of strategies, programmes and direct or indirect forms of support

There have never been any strategies for support to artists or creative workers. The first programme providing direct support to young artists was launched in 2004. The Young Directors' Festival is a financing scheme that supports the production of six plays by theatre directors under 35 years of age and a showcase, with the intention of awarding prizes for the best director, best performance and best male and female actor.

Another fund launched in 2008, the Young Artists Fund, provides incentives to national institutions hiring unemployed artists on a contractual basis and for specific projects lasting up to two years.

In October 2010 the government directly financed the programme "City of Arts", managed by the Academy of Arts, providing support for a total of 30 arts projects directed by professors and students of the Academy.

8.1.2 Special artists' funds

The President of the Republic grants pension supplements to certain artists who have been recommended by a body of experts from the Ministry of Culture. Otherwise, there are no special state support funds for artists in Albania.

Lack of information and experience has been a major obstacle for Albanian artists in their efforts to profit from international and / or European funding programmes, but lately there is a growing interest in this kind of funding. Film producers offer a good example to their colleagues from other genres. Unsatisfied with the Ministry's approach towards private initiatives in arts and culture, individuals and organisations working in other arts fields are increasingly trying to get sponsorships from EU programmes, like CARDS and Phare, or even USAID programmes.

There are no levies on book lending or sales, or audiovisual products or any other markets. Piracy remains a major issue in the Albanian cultural sector. In April 2006, the government approved a special *Act on the Establishment of the "Albanian Office of Copyright"*, but the office has not been set up yet.

Film exhibitors must pay 5% of their box office revenues to the National Film Centre, which in turn, must invest them in film production; however, this means very little to the Albanian film industry.

8.1.3 Grants, awards, scholarships

In 2006 the government announced another initiative, the Excellence Fund, to grant scholarships to individual artists and scholars to study abroad, as well as travel and project grants to outstanding Albanian-born artists living abroad, to show their work in Albania.

In addition to project grants, the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports issues five national prizes in the field of literature, amounting to 1 200 USD each (2005 figures), for poetry, prose, non-fiction, translation of works into Albanian and translation of works from Albanian into other languages. A selection committee of five members is made up of representatives from the Ministry, the National Library and professional associations. In addition, there is a special prize for children's literature including stories, poetry, works of non-fiction and illustrations. The selection is carried out through a similar committee, which also includes a psychologist and a painter.

Ten national prizes are awarded by KULT magazine, supported by the Ministry.

A prize for booksellers is planned for the future.

Except for the young theatre directors scheme (see chapter 8.1.1), there are no other programmes or grant schemes designed for start-ups or newcomers, scholarships for further training, travel bursaries or residency programmes.

8.1.4 Support to professional artists associations or unions

There are very few artists' associations in Albania, all of which are struggling for survival. The biggest is the Writers' League, once the country's only artists' association, which survives only due to the rental of its facilities. Film artists have established three associations but they all function as lobby organisations for film producers; none of the existing associations provide any support for their members.

Unions do not operate in Albania.

8.2 Cultural consumption and participation

8.2.1 Trends and figures

According to a report by the Council of Europe for the book sector in Albania, theatrical, musical and cinema performances have practically come to a standstill in recent years and specific government help is needed. As a result, the main media for the dissemination of information and culture are radio, television, books and magazines. The growing number of satellite dishes in Albanian towns makes television to be by far the leading medium.

Today, there are 28 daily newspapers, but their individual circulation ranges from 500 to 20 000 copies. While the number of newspapers has doubled over the last five years, their total circulation has fallen by around 30%. The newest daily, "Shqip", which was launched in March 2006, is actually the biggest. "Shqip" is an affiliate of the country's biggest media group, Top Media, which controls the leading Top Channel TV, Top Albania Radio and Digitalb platform for satellite and terrestrial digital paid programmes.

Experts say that the crisis in the printed media market is due to newspaper editorial policies. In recent years, many big business companies have invested in this market, but they have tried to use the power of their media to put pressure on, or even blackmail the government. Other media have been explicitly backing the government. There is a growing concern in society that the media is being abused by their owners, often suspected to have links with the underworld, in their power games. As a result, more Albanians abstain from reading daily papers. Publishers may offer prices as low as 10 ALL (0.08 EUR) per paper, which is half of the lowest price applied to any paper in 2000, or may offer the paper plus a music CD for 100 ALL (0.8 EUR) or 200 ALL (1.6 EUR) for the paper plus a bestselling book. Nevertheless, sales continue to fall and more readers prefer to read any paper offered for free from their favourite coffee bar!

The situation with regard to book reading is little different. Readership figures are generally low and even the leading best sellers sell fewer than 2 000 copies over a two-three year period (according to publisher's statements). Various interviews on this subject produced the following responses:

- in relation to average income, books are expensive; the average price of a book is approximately equal to an average day's pay (500 ALL);
- older people read more than the young, who read very little or not at all;

- dedicated readers prefer more traditional narrative material, especially from the 19th century; and
- the events of 1997 have had a negative effect on library lending.

All the interviewees emphasised that until the 1990s, reading was the predominant cultural activity and had no competition from other media. This explains both the age range and the preferences of dedicated readers. Nowadays the purchase of books is held back for economic reasons, even for this readership group, while, at the same time, public access to books is hampered by the terrible state of the libraries around the country, many of which were damaged during the crisis of 1997.

Recent reports from the Book Publishers' Association show a slight increase in book sales, mainly during book fairs. The book fairs may be considered as the "new fashion" in the book sector in Albania. At the end of October 2006, the Ministry of Tourism and Culture organised a three-day book fair, offering free exhibition space for all Albanian publishers and free admission for all visitors. The following week, the Book Publishers' Association organised its privately managed book fair.

To date there have been no surveys and thus, there is no statistical data regarding the participation of national minority or immigrant groups in cultural life.

8.2.2 Policies and programmes

There have been no significant changes in cultural policies involving other issues of civic participation, citizenship, civil society development / cohesion.

University students are entitled to a 50% discount on admission fees to all state-owned cultural institutions. Other than that, there are no programmes or special provisions to promote public participation in cultural activities.

8.3 Arts and cultural education

8.3.1 Institutional overview

Following the signing of the Bologna Declaration, the Parliament passed *Law no. 9741 on Higher Education* in May 2007 and amended it with *Law no. 9832* six months later. Nevertheless, the implementation of the Bologna Declaration turned out to be a hard task, especially with regard to higher arts education. The amendment suggested the creation of a two-level system for master's degrees, namely the scientific master and professional master, each obtainable after a full academic year.

But the big question was: if one can get a bachelor's degree after three-year studies and a master's degree with an additional two years, what would be the qualification of the enormous mass of those having a four-year university diploma issued from 1957 (the year of establishment of Tirana University) to 2009? Furthermore, would those people be offered a chance to get a master's degree, and, if yes, how would this be applied in a fair way to balance the huge number of potential applications with the very limited offer of admissions? To much pressure from all sides was placed on all public universities and it became a political crisis, while private universities felt very comfortable to offer master's degrees of both levels. This led to speculation in the media that the Ministry of Education was discriminating against public universities on purpose, to allow private universities expand their share of the market.

Finally, in 2010, the *Law on Higher Education* was amended again, with the *Law no.10307*, sanctioning that all four-year university diplomas issued up to 2009 would, by default, be re-evaluated into scientific master's degrees and those interested could now

apply for a one-year programme to obtain a professional masters degree, while universities would continue to offer three-year bachelor's and two-year masters programmes for all students admitted from 2009.

If other higher education institutions were simply challenged to re-shape their curricula to offer three-year bachelor and two-year master programmes, the Academy of Arts had to face an additional challenge. There were no formally qualified professors for Master of Arts programmes. The issue arose due to the traditional attitude of the Ministry of Education, which had never in the past asked for professors at all levels of arts education to obtain degrees, as arts education was not considered a scientific discipline. Even the most outstanding artists and long-time professors of the Academy of Arts did not have a degree. That made it possible for the Centre for Arts Studies of the Academy of Sciences to play a role in this. Since the centre has a limited but formally qualified body of professors, it can offer both master's and PhD programmes. It seems as if the Academy of Arts will have to wait for the first generation of PhD students to graduate from the Centre for Arts Studies, to hire professors for its master's programme.

The National Library is the centre for professional training of Albanian librarians. The first 2-year part-time training course was opened in this library in 1969, and continues to attract new librarians today. In addition to providing the basic skills to future librarians, the course publishes and distributes various training handbooks, classification tables, and other professional materials, including the journal *Buletini i bibliotekave* (Library Bulletin) which is published twice a year.

8.3.2 Arts in schools (curricula etc.)

The recent reform of Albania's education system has affected high schools. Since 2009, the elementary school system lasts for 9 instead of 8 years, while high school lasts for 3 instead of 4 years. For the first time, arts are considered one of the nine areas of high school education, with the other eight being sports, foreign languages, Albanian language and literature, mathematics, technology, natural sciences, social sciences and training for life and career. High school students must make their choice of two subjects out of a total of six comprising: music, dance, theatre, visual arts, history of art and history of world art. Before graduation, each student must have taken at least 105 hours of arts lessons.

Arts have their share also in the part of curricula based on student's choice. Those who wish to major in arts can take an additional 105 hours in two subjects of their choice, but different from the two they have already chosen as part of their mandatory curricula.

Also, since 2006, Albanian cultural heritage is one of the four mandatory high school diploma exams, no matter what their major field is.

8.3.3 Intercultural education

Intercultural education is a totally unknown concept in Albanian academic institutions. With the exception of some occasional joint-projects, involving guest artists and art educators from abroad, intercultural dialogue is missing in Albania's academic life.

8.3.4 Higher arts education and professional training

Until 2009, the Academy of Arts in Tirana was the only higher education institution dedicated to arts. The Academy was established and located at its current site in 1966, under the name of the "High Institute of Arts", by the fusion of "Alexander Moissi" School of Drama, the State Conservatory of Music and the Fine Arts School. These three schools still remain the pillars of the actual Academy, namely the School of Performing Arts, School of Visual Arts and School of Music. In 2004, a new department, dedicated to film and television, was added to the School of Performing Arts.

The Academy has not yet launched masters and other post-graduate programmes, though it has reshaped its bachelor programmes which now last 3 instead of 4 years. The School of Performing Arts offers degrees in directing for film & TV, directing for theatre, stage and costume design, choreography and acting for theatre. The School of Fine Arts offers degrees in painting, monumental painting, sculpture, ceramics, textiles and fashion, graphics, and multimedia. The School of Music offers degrees in musicology, composition, conducting, piano, violin, violoncello, viola, tube, bass, flute, clarinet, oboe, horn, fagot, trombone, canto, and classical guitar.

The Academy of Arts remains very popular due to its long tradition and almost free admission. However, the private Kristal University launched its School of Arts in 2009, offering degrees in classical string and brass instruments, canto, composition and conducting, and also textiles and fashion design. Sources from Kristal University say they have plans to offer programmes in theatre arts starting from 2011.

A relatively older and more consolidated professional school is Marubi Academy of Film and Multimedia, offering three year programmes in directing for film and TV, editing, cinematography and scriptwriting. Following the implementation of the *Law on Higher Education* and its amendments, Marubi Academy will offer bachelor degrees.

Both the Academy of Arts and Centre for Art Studies, a department of the Academy of Sciences of Albania, have announced they will be offering masters and PhD programmes from 2011.

8.3.5 Basic out-of school arts and cultural education (music schools, heritage, etc.)

Multi-arts centres used to offer art classes until 1991. This good practice is gone now, along with the equally good tradition of amateur arts ensembles among working collectives and schools of all levels. Since the fall of Communism, the government no longer supports amateur arts organisations, except for occasional (and very rare) individual projects.

Since the 2000's however, some parents, depending on their social and economic status, occasionally pay for private lessons for their children, especially in music instruments. In collaboration with the state television TVSH, a former theatre actor and TV director has established an acting school for elementary school pupils. Their shows go on air via TVSH.

The "Star Academy" and "The Little Genius" are two season shows of the national private TV Klan, in which amateurs competing for the awards of best singer, musician, dancer and actor, are offered classes by professionals.

The only institution that offers continuous training in the arts is Robert Radoja Academy of Arts, located in Tirana.

8.4 Amateur arts, cultural associations and civil initiatives

8.4.1 Amateur arts and folk culture

Amateur arts in Albania have a long-standing tradition, especially in the field of music. Folk groups are active in all Albanian towns and several music associations have been established. The Ministry of Culture finances a nation-wide folk festival in Gjirokastra, in which minority groups can also participate.

In fact, folklore, especially folk songs and dances, have always been considered a matter for amateurs in Albania. Under Communism, amateur groups of all genres and art forms could count on financial and technical support from central and local government.

Nowadays, the only amateur groups to get some project funding are folk ensembles (occasional support for recording and CDs) and Tirana high school students, who participate in an annual amateur festival for teens.

The most important institution of folk music and dance is the Folk Song and Dance Ensemble, now a division of the National Opera and Ballet Theatre. It has a sixty year long history and several awards at international folk festivals. At the time of its establishment, the ensemble was formed through auditions open to all amateurs interested. All selected members were trained in year long courses by professionals. With time, things changed and more and more graduates of the Academy of Arts joined the Ensemble, though it remained open to amateurs. Due to their status as full-time professionals, the Ensemble was never allowed to compete for any of the awards at the National Folk Ensemble in Gjirokastra, but as always it was invited to perform as a guest of honour during the final night.

Folk festivals are a new interesting reality in Albania. The National Folk Festival of Gjirokastra, first held in 1968, is still in business and is held every four years. All participants must meet the Festival's strict criteria: to perform an original piece of art, be it a song, a dance or an instrumental work, that was never performed or recorded before. The last edition of the Festival was in September 2009. Some 1 200 musicians, singers and dancers performed live during the week of the Festival on the stage within Gjirokastra Castle.

Other festivals are held in tourist cities, like Vlora, especially during the high tourist season in August. As a rule, they are non-competitive and open to international folk ensembles and performers. An exception is the Bylis Festival of Polyphony, which emphasises polyphony as a brilliant tradition of Balkan folklore.

8.4.2 Cultural houses and community cultural clubs

Most of the cultural centres are located in Tirana. The Italian Institute of Culture, the British Council, the Alliance Française, the Goethe Institute and USIS have opened reading rooms and also offer book and DVD or VHS lending. Apart from public libraries, there are no public or state-owned cultural clubs for youth or other communities or groups.

Unfortunately, community cultural centres or intercultural centres are not yet a cultural issue in Albania.

The table below provides an overview of the number of music associations in Albania, which are very important aspect of the country's cultural life.

Table 6: List of music associations and number of members

Name of association	Number of members
Association of Piano Teachers and Professors	400
Friends of Talented Children	400
Albanian Section of CIOFF	16 associations
Association of New Albanian Music	55
Albanian Association Frederic Chopin	55
Tirana Association	2 000
Polyphony	320
Association of Creative Intellectuals	100

Source: Directory of Art, Culture and Sports published by the Albanian Foundation of Civil Society

8.4.3 Associations of citizens, advocacy groups, NGOs, and advisory panels

There are no associations of citizens or advocacy groups dealing with cultural issues. Cultural NGOs are, as a rule, small non-profit entities run by individuals. The average Albanian citizen unfortunately is still highly individualistic and reluctant to all collective organisations. A few exceptions simply prove the rule. Another reason for that is policy and decision-makers' stubbornness and the lack of a lobbying tradition.

Under Communism, there was the League of Artists and Writers (LAW), a huge organisation gathering every individual working in the arts. The League published a weekly paper, a bi-monthly literary magazine, a quarterly arts magazine, series of books and had considerable assets and subsidies. In the early 1990's, financial support fell drastically and the League faced a severe financial crisis. Some artists proposed that the League be changed into an umbrella organisation for the new artist unions and associations that were being established. Unfortunately that did not happen. In a pure totalitarian attitude, fellow members contributed to fragmentation and exclusion. When film artists formed their association, they were expelled from the League and the same happened with musicians and visual artists. Finally, writers could claim the League belonged to them only and changed its name into the League of Artists. But it didn't stop there. Supporters of those who did not make it to win the League elections in 1996 established an alternative organisation namely the League of Anti-communist Writers, implying that the League had remained a communist organisation. Indeed, the fight was for the control of the League's capital and financial resources. The battle went on for almost a decade, through protests, petitions, lawsuits and court decisions. The League lost its support and eventually was "captured" by the "anti-communists" in 2005. A year later, the government decided to take back the building that had served as the League's historic site and cut off all financing. This time there was nobody to stand up for the League. The building became the new site of the Ministry of Tourism and Culture and the League was dissolved.

A pure exception is the case of the film industry. The *Law on Cinema* of 1996 required for the then sole Association of Film Artists to have the exclusive right of selecting members of all National Film Centre boards. In 2005, two alternative associations were formed and all three joined efforts to lobby and eventually succeeded in amending the Law allowing for all associations to share this right. As a result, now there are six associations and they all share the same right, through a joint assembly.

9. Sources and links

9.1 Key documents on cultural policy

Feri, Xhevdet: *Why do reforms stop?* A controversial study on cultural policies in the fields of theatre and cinema in Albania. Available in English. Can be downloaded from http://www.policiesforculture.org/administration/upload/Albania_FinalReport_Nov2003.pdf

Politika kulturore ne Shqiperi / The Cultural Politic in Albania (speeches), a bi-lingual publication. Editor "Naim Frasher". ISBN 99927-38-26-X.

Council of Europe: *Cultural Policy in Albania (Part I, Contribution from the Albanian authorities and Part II, review of the cultural policy in Albania)*, Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2000. [http://www.coe.int/t/e/cultural_co-operation/culture/policies/reviews/CC-CULT\(2000\)54A_EN.pdf?L=EN](http://www.coe.int/t/e/cultural_co-operation/culture/policies/reviews/CC-CULT(2000)54A_EN.pdf?L=EN)

9.2 Key organisations and portals

Cultural policy making bodies:

Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports
<http://www.mtkrs.gov.al>

National Film Centre
<http://www.nationalfilmcenter.gov.al>

Professional associations:

National Theatre
<http://www.teatrikombetar.info>

Tirana International Film Festival
<http://www.tiranafilmfest.com>

National Institute of Monuments
http://www.imk.gov.al/index_en.htm

Grant-giving bodies:

Noli Foundation
<http://www.fannoli.org>

Butrinti Foundation
<http://www.butrintfound.dial.pipex.com>

Cultural research and statistics:

Studies on Albanian literature and drama
<http://www.elsie.de>

Albanian Academy of Sciences

<http://www.akad.edu.al/>

National Film Archive

<http://www.aqshf.gov.al/?gj=en>

National Library

<http://www.bksh.al/index.htm>

Culture / arts portals:

Arts and Literature

<http://www.albacenter.it>

Music

<http://www.albmuzika.com>

Theatre

http://myweb.tiscali.co.uk/albania/theatre/albanian_theatre.html

Arts

<http://www.albaniaartinstitute.org>

Visual Arts

<http://www.albanianarts.com/aart>