

Country Profile

Armenia

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1. Cultural policy system	4
1.1. Objectives, main features and background	4
1.2. Domestic governance system	7
1.2.1. Organisational organigram	7
1.2.2. National authorities	8
1.2.3. Regional authorities	9
1.2.4. Local authorities	10
1.2.5. Main non-governmental actors	11
1.2.6. Transversal co-operation	12
1.3. Cultural institutions	12
1.3.1. Overview of cultural institutions	12
1.3.2. Data on selected public and private cultural institutions	13
1.3.3. Public cultural institutions: trends and strategies	13
1.4. International cooperation	15
1.4.1. Public actors and cultural diplomacy	15
1.4.2. European / international actors and programmes	17
1.4.3. NGO's and direct professional cooperation	19
2. Current cultural affairs	20
2.1. Key developments	20
2.2. Cultural rights and ethics	21
2.3. Role of artists and cultural professionals	22
2.4. Digital policy and developments	23
2.5. Cultural and social diversity	24
2.5.1. National / international intercultural dialogue	24
2.5.2. Diversity education	25
2.5.3. Media pluralism and content diversity	26
2.5.4. Language	28
2.5.5. Gender	28
2.5.6. Disability	30
2.6. Culture and social inclusion	31
2.7. Societal impact of arts	33
2.8. Cultural sustainability	33
2.9. Other main cultural policy issues	34
3. Cultural and creative sectors	35
3.1. Heritage	35
3.2. Archives and libraries	36
3.3. Performing arts	38
3.4. Visual arts and crafts	39
3.5. Cultural arts and creative industries	41
3.5.1. General developments	41
3.5.2. Books and press	42
3.5.3. Audiovisual and interactive media	43
3.5.4. Music	44
3.5.5. Design and creative services	44
3.5.6. Cultural and creative tourism	45
4. Law and legislation	46
4.1. General legislation	46
4.1.1. Constitution	46
4.1.2. Allocation of public funds	46
4.1.3. Social security frameworks	46
4.1.4. Tax laws	47
4.1.5. Labour laws	47
4.1.6. Copyright provisions	47
4.1.7. Data protection laws	48
4.1.8. Language laws	48
4.1.9. Other areas of general legislation	48
4.2. Legislation on culture	49

4.2.1. General legislation on culture	49
4.2.2. Legislation on culture and natural heritage	51
4.2.3. Legislation on performance and celebration	52
4.2.4. Legislation on visual arts and crafts	52
4.2.5. Legislation on books and press	53
4.2.6. Legislation on audiovisual and interactive media	53
4.2.7. Legislation on design and creative services	54
5. Arts and cultural education	55
5.1. Policy and institutional overview	55
5.2. Arts in schools	57
5.3. Higher arts and cultural education	57
5.4. Out-of-school arts and cultural education	58
5.5. Vocational and professional training	58
6. Cultural participation and consumption	59
6.1. Policies and programmes	59
6.2. Trends and figures in cultural participation	59
6.3. Trends and figures in household expenditure	59
6.4. Culture and civil society	60
7. Financing and support	62
7.1. Public funding	62
7.1.1. Indicators	62
7.1.2. Expenditure on government level	62
7.1.3. Expenditure per sector	63
7.2. Support programmes	64
7.2.1. Strategies, programmes and other forms of support	64
7.2.2. Artist's funds	65
7.2.3. Grants, awards, scholarships	65
7.2.4. Support to professional artists' associations or unions	66
7.3. Private funding	67
Expert Authors	68

1. Cultural policy system

1.1. Objectives, main features and background

The cultural policy in Armenia was seriously changed after the Velvet revolution of 2018. The appearance of new political elites has strongly influenced new public perceptions of culture and development of a new system of cultural policy and management. Significant transformations first started in the institutional sphere. In 2019, the government's new optimized organizational structure was introduced, where respective ministries of education and science, culture, sports and youth had been reorganized into a Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports[1]. The newly created Ministry defined its main functions as follows: "The Ministry is a central body of executive authority that elaborates and implements the policy of the Government of the Republic of Armenia in the spheres of education, science, culture and sport".[2] Such a transformation was ambiguously accepted by public circles and many critics emphasized that it would not be going to effectively resolve accumulated problems in the mentioned spheres, but would lead to more centralization of power and, generally, wouldn't be effective in institutional and financial terms. [3]



The new Charter of the Ministry (2019) defines the goals, objectives, functions and methodologies of institutional and financial management of the Ministry.

1. The main goals and objectives of the cultural policy are:

- Enhancing the intellectual, spiritual, creative and physical potential of the Armenian people
- Providing equal and open access to high quality education, cultural institutions and facilities, and sports for everyone independently of age, gender and physical abilities.
- Preservation, creation and promotion of national cultural heritage
- Raising new generations in accordance to patriotic and humanistic values.
- Providing equal facilities and opportunities for healthy physical and mental development of individuals and communities.
- Considering and developing education, science, culture and sports as the main factors for developing the economy, competitiveness, societal progress and security.

2. The Ministry's general functions correspondingly lie in: developing policies and programmes and bringing them into compliance with international conventions, norms and agreements; implementing programme and financial management, monitoring and evaluation of targeted programmes and projects; international

cooperation; and mediation between private and public sectors.

The main substantial distinctions of current policies from the previous ones may be formulated as: a) an integrative perception of culture as a compound of creative, value-generation/preservation, intellectual and physical development processes; b) the focus on accessibility of and targeted involvement in, culture, education, creative activities and sports, for all social groups of the population, both individuals and communities.

In the new government programme developed immediately after the snap parliamentary elections of June 2021, which accepted by the National Assembly (August 2021), culture is not separately addressed and makes up part of the general concept of “development of human potential”.

Main features

Article 6 of the Law on the Principles of Cultural Legislation (2002) defined culture as "a set of modes of activities, perceptions and thinking in the material and spiritual fields of the society and their expression representing a stated value". Since 2009, another broader definition of culture included in the *Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity* has been introduced. It states that culture "should be regarded as the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of a society or social groups, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs". No other official definition or concept of culture appeared since.

However, post-revolutionary authorities (the “Civil agreement” party) have brought several concepts of cultural development, which are reflected in their political programme as of June 2021 for the next 5 years[4]. Put briefly, it includes optimization, technical, technological and substantial modernisation, community involvement, infrastructural development, diversity and creativity support, and heritage protection/preservation. To generalize, the main idea is that better access to culture and education, creativity and technological advancement are thought to provide an economically, socially and physically more developed and secure environment.

Background

During the last 70 years Armenia has passed through a number of political regimes each imposing its own system of perception, management, implementation and control over culture.

1950-1991 – The Soviet regime

The Soviet system of cultural policies and management was extremely politicised and ideologised. Education and culture were tightly controlled and orchestrated by party and government officials through a pyramidal system of power. In general, it can be characterised as a strongly "paternalistic" model according to Abraham Mole's definition[5]. All professionals in art, literature, music were registered as members of the so called "creative unions" managed and controlled by party officials. On the other hand, “bringing culture and education to the masses” was the main concept of the soviet cultural policy. Culture and education were perceived as the

main and the most powerful tools of soviet propaganda since the first days of Soviet power. Armenia as an integrative part of the Soviet Union underwent all stages of cultural transformation with some local specifics. Firstly, infrastructural development was prioritised: thousands of schools, houses of culture, institutions of technical and higher education, art and music schools, theatres, cinema theatres, music halls, libraries and museums had been built throughout the country. Most of educational institutions were free of charge and the charge for cultural events (concerts, performances, cinema, etc.) was minimal and accessible even to those on low incomes. Secondly, creative arts, literature and science was funded by the state only, in a centralized way, and the state officials (through membership in different committees and the censorship system) used to decide who/what deserved funding and who/what did not. Thirdly, special attention was paid to mass media and mass literature: thousands of books, news-papers and magazines in millions of printed copies were issued daily and disseminated through official (in some cases obligatory) subscription networks.[6]. All this ensured the process of active everyday consumption of highly regulated and controlled mass culture. At the same time, culture as a concept was very limited, it was understood as a scope of selected cultural heritage and creative activities as arts, literature, music, etc. implemented within the communist, socialist and atheist ideological frameworks. Cultural diversity was understood only as a variety of ethnographic cultures: the population of all Soviet republics was divided into the privileged "title" nations and the unprivileged "minorities". Religion was excluded from the definition of culture. In terms of language, national history and cultural heritage, the Soviet authorities conducted the politics of standardization, unification and russification, although in some republics including Armenia these trends were less effective.

1991-2021 The post-Soviet developments

During the first decades since independence, some Soviet perceptions and patterns of implementation and management of culture like the centralized pyramidal management, the predominantly state funding of education and cultural institutions, and the perception of education and culture as a tool for ideological/political propaganda, etc., were preserved. However, the adoption of a market economy and the developing oligarchic system of political power appeared to be destructive for the Soviet cultural and educational infrastructures, especially in rural communities. Tens of schools, houses of culture, museums, and theatres were privatized, sold, reconstructed and changed functions or even completely destroyed. The private and international funding reanimated performative and creative arts, but could not recover the previous scale of consumption of cultural education and mass culture and the government programmes and strategies did not set such a goal.

Recent changes in the cultural policy system, their main reasons and motivations

Pre-revolutionary cultural development policy[7] focused mostly on preservation of tangible and intangible cultural heritage, development of cultural infrastructures, international collaboration and considered public TV as a main tool for cultural promotion. Practically, that meant the allocation of money for different construction and reconstruction projects, and targeted funding for cultural actors, preferred by the government, that contained a lot of corruption risks. The velvet revolution of 2018, aimed at annihilation of corruption and conducting the democratic/economic transformations of the country was a main reason for changing policies, including those related to culture and education. However, the rapidity and the complicated political agenda of

revolutionary events did not give enough time and possibilities to fully develop profound and well-thought concepts and programmes, although their main principles were formulated as it was mentioned above. The COVID-19 pandemic and the Azerbaijani-Armenian war (2020) were other serious factors affected policy changes. For instance, the war and the Azerbaijani occupation of the Armenian-populated territories of Karabakh exacerbated the problem of protection and physical preservation of the Armenian cultural heritage, and the pandemic forced the government to resort to necessary reconsiderations of its strategies and to make a stronger focus on creativity, infrastructural development and modern technologies.

[1] <https://www.arlis.am/documentview.aspx?docID=130615>

[2] <https://www.gov.am/en/structure/275/>

[3] <https://www.e-draft.am/projects/1503/digest>

[4] See the full programme at: <https://www.civilcontract.am/hy/culture>

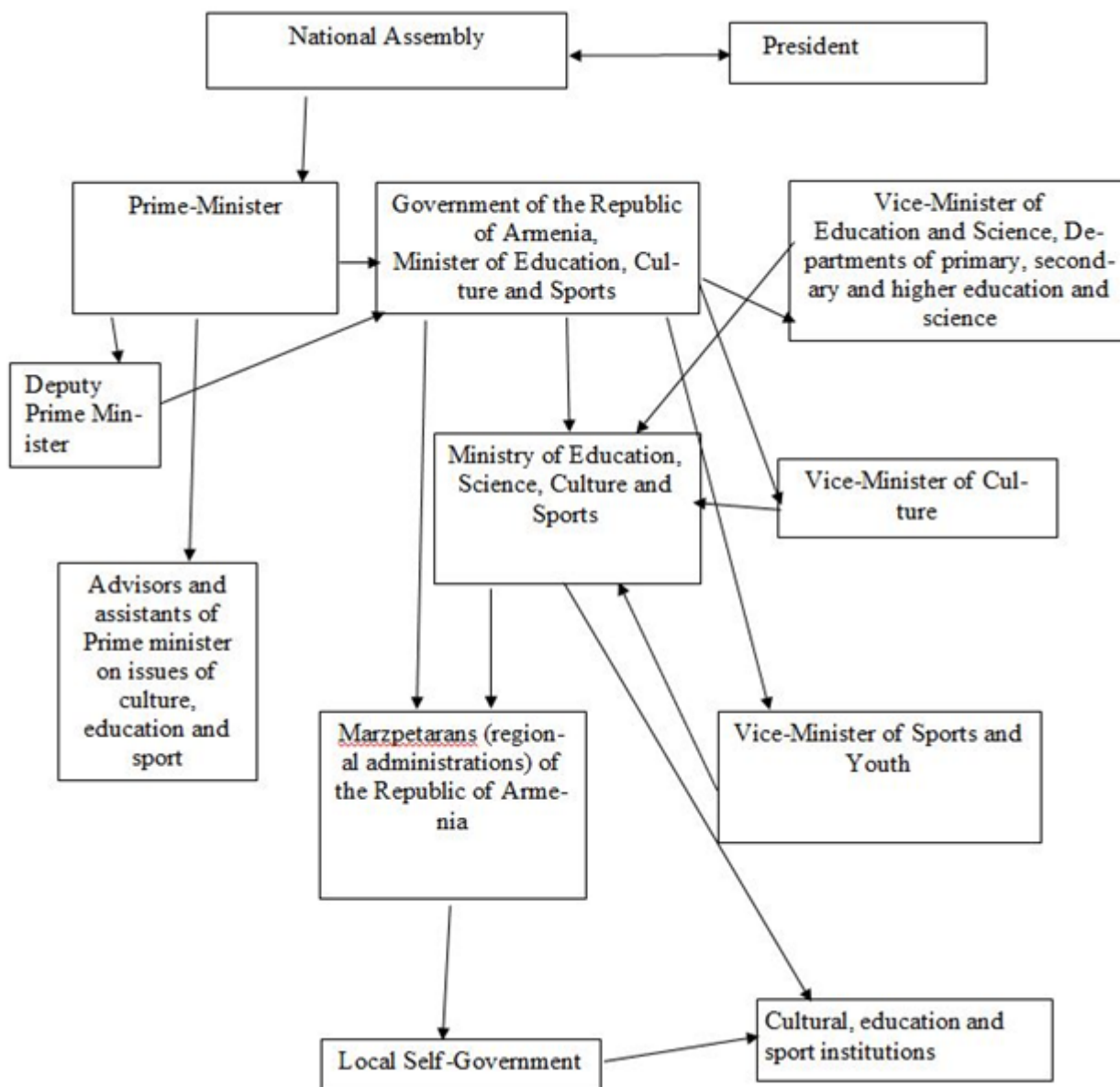
[5] Moles, A. Sotsiodinamika kultury [Sociodynamics of culture]: Translated from French. B.V. Biryukov. 3rd edition. M.: LKI Publishing house, 2008.

[6] Khudaverdyan K. Kul'turnaya revolyutsiya v Sovetskoy Armenii (1920-1940), Yerevan, 1969.

[7] <https://escs.am/files/files/2019-07-04/e3c0b7f3ce6e00f5a386a824e84f02d9.pdf>

1.2. Domestic governance system

1.2.1. ORGANISATIONAL ORGANIGRAM



1.2.2. NATIONAL AUTHORITIES

The role and function of state government bodies, local self-government bodies, and non-state organizations in cultural policy are defined according to corresponding laws and legal regulations. The Law on Local Self-Government, adopted in 2002 and amended in 2021[1], the Law on Basics of Cultural Legislation adopted in 2002 and amended in 2011[2], and the Law on Public Organizations adopted in 2016[3] are particularly important in this regard.

Most of laws and legal decisions regulating the relationships of cultural policy main actors were adopted in the 2000s, thus forming the basis of the modern cultural policy system. However, it is worth noting that all these laws were revised and reformulated during the period of 2018-2020 in an attempt to adapt the governance of culture to the new political system and institutional changes. Thus, according to the Law on the Basics of Cultural Legislation, the Government of the Republic of Armenia:

1. ensures the implementation of the state cultural policy;
2. creates a foundation for development of culture and approves its charter in order to attract additional

- financial resources for the preservation, dissemination and development of culture;
3. the law defines the order of privileges to benefit from the paid services of cultural organizations for some groups of the population (pre-school children, school children, students, pensioners, disabled people, conscripts);
 4. grants legal statuses to non-commercial cultural organizations, defines the procedure and conditions for granting statuses.

State governance in the field of culture is carried out by the state body authorized by the government of the Republic of Armenia (The Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of the Republic of Armenia, hereinafter: MESCS of RA). The authorized state body:

1. implements the state cultural policy, participates in the development of cultural legislation and state programmes for the preservation, dissemination and development of culture;
2. participates in the development of educational standards (standards), methodological manuals and programmes in the field of culture;
3. participates in the formation of foreign policy in the field of culture within the limits of its powers;
4. exerts control over the export and import of cultural values in accordance with the law.
5. submits petitions for awarding state awards of the Republic of Armenia and honorary titles in the field of culture and art;
6. creates a unified state information system in order to ensure cultural activities in the territory of the Republic of Armenia;
7. manages the administrative statistics in the sphere of culture, and listing of cultural organizations;
8. discovers, registers, studies, restores and preserves objects of cultural heritage;
9. maintains state lists of cultural heritage objects.
10. organizes the professional education, training and retraining of employees in the field of culture;
11. submits a petition on granting "National" status to certain non-commercial cultural organizations: theatre, music, dance, museums, libraries and archives.

A significant change in the relationships between the state and the cultural sphere is especially noticeable in terms of decentralization of cultural policy and publicity of decision-making. In particular, it is possible to observe legal changes, new approaches, the introduction of a new practice of public debates over the programme development strategies, and the organization of transparent competitions in the field of cultural development, expressed rather weakly before 2018.

[1] See: <http://www.irtek.am/views/act.aspx?aid=150060>

[2] See: <https://www.arlis.am/documentview.aspx?docID=69109>

[3] See: <https://www.arlis.am/documentview.aspx?docID=110802>

1.2.3. REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

The territory of RA is divided into ten regions and the city of Yerevan, which is governed by the law "On Local Self-Government in the City of Yerevan"[1]. The relations of the sphere of public administration in the regions of the Republic of Armenia are regulated by the decree of the President of the Republic of Armenia "On public administration in the regions of the Republic of Armenia"[2] and other legal acts.

There are departments of cultural management in the structure of regional administrations. The governor is the main person responsible for regional administration and implementation of cultural policies. Governors implement the government's regional policies, coordinate the activities of regional services of executive bodies, conduct regional cultural politics, which should not contradict the general vision of state policy in its goals and objectives.

Thus, the regional administration ensures the implementation of the state cultural policy in the territory of the region, organizes public cultural events related to state, national and other holidays and memorial days, contributes to the restoration and dissemination of national rituals, exerts power established by law for the preservation and utilization of historical and cultural monuments located in the territory of the region, and organizes the construction, maintenance and operation of cultural objects and recreation areas for the territory of the region.

[1] See: <https://www.arlis.am/documentview.aspx?docid=73279>

[2] See: <https://www.arlis.am/documentview.aspx?docid=51838>

1.2.4. LOCAL AUTHORITIES

According to the Law on Local Self-Government[1], the head of the community implements the following functions in the field of education, culture and youth work.

organizes and manages the activities of schools, kindergartens, clubs, culture houses, libraries, other educational and cultural institutions and organizations, their operation and repair works.

The head of the community has the following functions:

- organizes events related to the holidays and memorial days of the Republic of Armenia.
- supports the development of crafts, folk creativity and artistic self-activity;
- supports the preservation of historical and cultural monuments in the territory of the community;
- records, classifies and distributes the information about the historical-cultural, natural and tourist-recreational resources located in the territory of the community;
- supports increasing the role of youth;
- supports the activities of public schools. The Law on Local Government, adopted in 1996 and amended in 2012 and 2016, was the first attempt to decentralize cultural policy, to dismantle of the highly centralized and paternalistic Soviet model of cultural policy and to create a decentralized model of cultural policy on a liberal basis.

If the Soviet model assumed the adoption and implementation of decisions only from the "centre" /Ministry of Culture/, then in the years of independence, especially in the first decade, the culture management system was decentralized, which became the basis for the disintegration of a number of cultural structures, for example, community libraries, culture houses, art schools. Being cut off from the direct funding and patronage of the Ministry of Culture and passing under the authority of the municipal governments without receiving the appropriate financial and technical support, most community cultural institutions have been disintegrated, disappeared or survived just formally[2].

[1] See <https://www.arlis.am/documentview.aspx?docID=73271>

[2] See: Muradyan H., Houses of Culture in Soviet and post-Soviet times: Semantic and Functional Transformations and Heredity, Proceedings of the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography, HAIA-3, Yerevan, 2019, 194-203.

1.2.5. MAIN NON-GOVERNMENTAL ACTORS

Non-governmental cultural organizations, or in other words, non-commercial cultural organizations, began to form in Armenia after independence, in 1991. A large number of organizations had been formed especially in the 2000s, which was related to the internal stabilization of the political and economic situation in Armenia, active foreign politics and cooperation with international structures and organizations. In 2005, the law on non-governmental cultural organizations was adopted.[1]. According to the law, such organizations have a right to implement cultural and business activities, which are not prohibited by the legislation of the Republic of Armenia and correspond to the main organizational goals and purposes, that is production of relevant goods, provision of relevant services and implementation of their property and non-property rights.[2] Cultural non-commercial organizations can also engage in certain types of activities that are subject to licensing or a special permit.

Non-governmental public cultural organizations play a significant role in the implementation of the cultural policy of the Republic of Armenia. Their establishment and activities are regulated according to the corresponding law.[3] Public organizations began to establish themselves in the field of cultural policy immediately after Armenia had become independent. Cultural NGOs are divided between several spheres according to the type of their activities. Those are the protection of human rights in the spheres of culture and education; dealing with cultural, environmental, social problems, related to vulnerable groups such as people with disabilities, refugees, the elderly, children, and the protection of the rights of journalists. Most of the registered NGOs are concentrated in Yerevan.

Non-governmental organizations have the right to independently implement cultural programmes, develop their own policies aimed at the preservation and development of culture, but according to the law regulating the activities of such NGOs, these activities must not contradict the concept of the state cultural policy. The number of organizations subordinated to the Ministry of Education and Culture of RA has increased over recent years, reaching to 100[4]. Some of these are: "Dialogue of Cultures" NGO, "Creative Europe Cultural Platform" NGO, "ARI" Literary Foundation, "Art Institute of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia" NOC, "Aram Khachatryan-Competition Cultural Fund", "International Academy of Culture and Performing Arts" NGO, "Filmadaran" Cinema Culture Development NGO, "Armenian Pop Jazz Orchestra" SNOC, "Teryan Cultural Centre" NGO, "Civil Art" Cultural NGO, etc. Non-governmental organizations subordinated to the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Armenia are also indirectly involved in development of state cultural policies through public debates, organized prior to presentation of policies and laws at sessions of the Parliament.

[1] See: <https://www.arlis.am/documentview.aspx?docid=21548>

[2] See: <https://www.arlis.am/documentview.aspx?docid=51750>

[3] See: <https://www.arlis.am/documentview.aspx?docID=110802>

[4] <https://ngoc.am/en/resources/hk-form/page/11/>

1.2.6. TRANSVERSAL CO-OPERATION

The Republic of Armenia supports the development of international and intra-national cultural cooperation, encourages independent and direct participation of citizens and organizations in international and intra-national cultural exchanges.

The policy of international cultural exchanges of the Republic of Armenia, its primary directions are defined by the interstate agreements of the Republic of Armenia and the state programmes of preservation, dissemination and development of culture.

Intra-regional cultural cooperation is supported by different local and state programmes such as support to festivals, community tourism, cultural and educational visits and exchanges between communities. Such projects are funded with local budget or donor organizations and coordinated by local authorities, educational institutions or local NGOs. The organization of festivals and regional cultural events is backed by several legal acts and decisions[1]. Among regional festivals the most known are: the barbecue festival organized in Akhtala in Lori province, the Blueberry Festival in Lori in Margahovit village, "Tavush Wine Days", Tolma Festival in Armavir, Pumpkin Festival in Hovk village of Tavush, Areni Wine Festival, Harvest Festival in Dzoraghbyur, Gata Festival in Vayots Dzor - Khachik village, Arts and Crafts Festival in Dilijan, Honey and Berry Festival in Tavush - Berd village, Beerday in Gyumri, etc. The festivals often include performances and fairs with participants from different regions.

[1] <https://www.arlis.am/documentview.aspx?docID=87690>

1.3. Cultural institutions

1.3.1. OVERVIEW OF CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

Since the Soviet times, Armenia has inherited the large network of public institutions (schools, universities, houses of culture, art and music schools, libraries, theatres, cinema theatres, museums, and art galleries) and a widely shared perception that education and culture should be orchestrated, managed and financially covered primarily by the state.

However, since as early as the 1990's, a number of NGOs and private organizations acting in the sphere of education and culture has significantly increased[1]. Their activities in very rare cases were compatible with the governmental strategies, only in those cases when they were founded by governmental officials or their relatives and received grants from the state to implement programmes to be delegated to the public/private sector. Today more than 50 organizations and private institutions are implementing state programmes in the sphere of culture[2]. However, they have not played any serious role in the policy-making process, with minor exceptions, like the YFA (Youth for Achievement) case (2010-2012), when its members participated in the international "Black Sea Cultural Animation" programme and could make some input in the state strategy development.[3]

Some profit-making prospects also stirred up the process of emerging private institutions such as

art/dance/music schools, private museums/galleries and, quite recently, private theatres. Their number increased as the effectiveness and quality of state institutions declined. For instance, currently there are about 120 private museums/galleries, but only 50 of them are registered in the list of cultural institutions of the Ministry of ESCS.[4] However, their influence on policy-making is becoming increasingly more important. Thus, the law on museums has been discussed since 2011, but has not finally shaped, because it does not appropriately address private museums and galleries and does not fully reflect their problems and interests.

[1] The current number of registered NGOs in Armenia is 5408, foundations – 1418, and community enterprises 1449, see: <https://www.moj.am/legal/view/article/1420/>

[2] <https://www.govtravel.am>

[3] <http://kasa.am/hy/>, <https://www.culturepartnership.eu/am/article/creative-industries-study-for-armenia>

[4] <https://escs.am/am/static/museums?s=culture>

1.3.2. DATA ON SELECTED PUBLIC AND PRIVATE CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

Table 1: Cultural institutions, by sector and domain

Domain	Cultural institutions (subdomains)	Public sector	
		2016-2017	2020-2021
Cultural heritage	Cultural heritage sites (recognised)	24.221	24.221
	Archaeological sites	N/A	N/A
Museums	Museum institutions	106	100
Archives	Archive institutions	N/A	N/A
Visual arts	Public art galleries / exhibition halls	1	1
Performing arts	Scenic and stable spaces for theatre	28	26
	Concert houses		
	Theatre companies	28	26
	Dance and ballet companies	1	1
	Symphonic orchestras	1	1
Libraries	Libraries	733	664
Audiovisual	Cinemas	N/A	N/A
	Broadcasting organisations	N/A	N/A
Interdisciplinary	Socio-cultural centres / cultural houses	N/A	N/A
Other (please explain)		N/A	N/A

Source(s): <https://escs.am/am/static/statistist>,

https://statbank.armstat.am/pxweb/hy/ArmStatBank/?rxid=9ba7b0d1-2ff8-40fa-a309-fae01ea885bb&fbclid=IwAR2CPkrEix7CCjNHCTrOp56MQkvYPVa5CBSIqzhajdcFXzrM_bJacAeRohc

1.3.3. PUBLIC CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS: TRENDS AND STRATEGIES

Today's network of public cultural institutions of the Republic of Armenia, generally founded back in the Soviet 1920-30s, have been perpetually undergoing semantic and morphological changes, which became dramatic especially in the post-Soviet period. Although in the post-soviet period new cultural and educational structures and institutions began to emerge, the old ones also proved to be viable after some more or less significant

changes. In the post-soviet period, most of the cultural institutions underwent structural and legal status changes. Since 2002, museums, libraries, and performance organisations (theatres and concert-halls) have been reorganised into state non-profit organisations. Large cultural organisations were awarded "National" status (The National Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre, The National Gallery of Armenia, The National Library, The National Television, The National Book Chamber). Only the State Academic Theatre, named after G. Sundukyan, was not awarded national status, although it continued to be considered the main theatre of the country ("Mother-theatre"). The local networks of Soviet cultural institutions were rather large; they included museums, libraries, theatres, houses of culture, clubs, creative unions, cinemas and other institutions. In the post-Soviet period, they got rid of socialist ideology, but most of the cultural centres such as houses of culture, clubs, creative unions, some theatres and cinemas were cut off from state institutional and financial support, and in accordance with the Local Government Law adopted in 1996, were passed under the control of municipal governments. Some institutions like most of the cinema theatres, some houses of culture and libraries were alienated from community budgets (sometimes illegally), privatized and ceased operating. Alternatively, new types of cultural organizations and structures emerged such as private theatres, church-managed cultural houses with an accent on religious topics, private art and dance schools, etc., which tried to fill the gap.

Although the Local Government Law was the first step in the decentralization of cultural policies and institutions, it must be noted that the newly formed municipal governments did not have adequate resources to maintain these structures and simply closed some of them or at best just provided minimal means to sustain their formal existence. In relation to the renovation of cultural institutions, their institutional "revival" began only in the 2000s, in connection with the internal and external stabilization of RA, with the establishment of the legislative field, active international cooperation, and the signing of many conventions and declarations. However, the "revival" appeared to be just superficial, and no serious reformation or big financial investments into qualitative development of cultural institutions had not been made until recently. Similarly, in the sphere of cultural politics no innovative strategies, alternative solutions or new standards and values had been developed. On the contrary, in the 2010's, a period of restoration of the soviet-like statuses, hierarchies, privileges and ideological functions under the patronage of the ruling party (The Republican party of Armenia) began and went deeper and deeper.

After the "Velvet" revolution (2018), the process of revising cultural institutions was launched. Despite the political instability, pandemics and war, the cultural sphere has demonstrated increasing trends of quantitative and qualitative development. There were no budgetary reductions for the state cultural organisations; on the contrary, there is a tendency for growth, also due to larger access to grants' programmes run by different funds. The Ministry of Culture continues to finance the state cultural institutions, which, in their turn, are free to cooperate with any local and foreign donor organisations. Institutionalised structures of the Armenian Diaspora (political parties, cultural unions, benevolent foundations, etc) and individuals also provide financial sources for cultural institutions. The local sponsors contribute mainly to popular culture and show business. A number of NGOs, CJSCs and funds established in recent years are actively implementing regional and international cooperation in the cultural sphere. They are also partnering with local and state government, different educational institutions and other NGOs. Approximately 900 NGOs are registered in the cultural sphere, making up to 33% of all registered NGOs. In the provinces, one cultural organisation is counted per 1 334 residents (the total population in provinces (except Yerevan) is 2 116 300, and the total number of cultural organisations is 1 586).

Projects on infrastructural renovation and development, cultural creativity grants, the optimization of

management and structure of cultural institutions were implemented or planned for implementation. The repertoires of some state theatres such as the Opera Theatre, the State Dramatic Theatre have significantly improved and the number of performances has doubled and even tripled. This created larger opportunities for self-sustainability. However, not all transformations were understood and approved by the beneficiaries. Thus, the project of merging two theatres, the State Chamber Musical Theatre and the State Musical Comedy Theatre evoked much dissatisfaction, debates, protests and struggle. As a result, the process of merging was temporarily frozen. In general, however, despite a lot of structural and qualitative improvements, the post-revolutionary government is much criticized for its uncertain or maldeveloped cultural strategies and politics, and especially for the structural transformations and personnel politics of public cultural institutions.

1.4. International cooperation

1.4.1. PUBLIC ACTORS AND CULTURAL DIPLOMACY

During thirty years of independence, Armenia has established cooperation with almost all important European, Eurasian and International players like EU, UNESCO, ICOM, WMF, BSI, INCP, CIS, etc., and accepted and ratified tens of international conventions in the sphere of culture. The international collaboration and cooperation has traditionally pursued the following goals: 1. Political and normative integration through legislative compliance with international norms and agreements in the sphere of culture; 2. Professional and institutional integration through different professional and institutional networks; 3. Keeping up with the international trends and processes through professional improvement, individual development projects, professional consulting, etc.; 4. Getting financial support from international grant making organizations and cultural grant programmes; 5. Marketing and promotion of Armenian culture and cultural tourism.

Currently, most of these objectives have not changed. It may be added that Armenia is currently seeking a serious improvement of the country's image and international cooperation in the sphere of culture is seen as one of the possible tools. That's why there is state support for different international cultural events, festivals, conferences, etc. However, there are some distinctions from the previous strategies. The post-war consequences made the government focus on targeted contacts and cooperation with UNESCO, WMF, BSI, European Association of Archeologists, ALIPH international alliance, etc. on the burning problem of rescuing and preservation of the Armenian cultural heritage on the territories under the Azerbaijani control. The Armenian side is seeking support, international awareness on the problem and, possibly, international pressure on Azerbaijan, which has already distorted or even completely destroyed a number of cultural and historical monuments.

Also, Armenia is deepening its international cultural and educational cooperation through the Armenian diaspora and the Diaspora organizations. The current programmes are aimed at creating pan-Armenian cultural, creative and educational networks and platforms^[1], as well as providing better involvement in the Armenian development processes by some foreign educational and cultural institutions through Armenians working there. Regarding the policy of international cultural exchanges of the Republic of Armenia, its primary directions are defined by the interstate agreements of the Republic of Armenia and the state programmes of preservation, dissemination and development of culture. The Republic of Armenia (together with other states and the Diaspora) supports the activities of Armenian cultural centres and organizations in foreign countries and promotes the preservation, dissemination and development of national culture and art.

In recent years, the use of the bilateral format of international cooperation in foreign policy has been noticed. Since 2018, a number of agreements, memorandums and programmes have been signed for the purpose of cultural development and cultural loans. For example, in 2018-2021 some agreements of cooperation in the fields of education, culture, youth and science were signed between the government of the Republic of Armenia and the government of the Republic of Bulgaria[2], Korea[3], Swiss Humanitarian Foundation "KAZA"[4], and The Russian Federation[5]. A memorandum of understanding was signed between the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of the Republic of Armenia and the British Council on cooperation within the framework of the "Creative Industry Policy Dialogue" programme in 2021[6]. These and other programmes strengthen international cultural and educational ties of Armenia.

The main actor of RA's cultural policy is the Ministry of Cultural Affairs. According to the RA Law "On Making Amendments and Additions to the Law "On the Structure and Activities of the Government" adopted on 08.05.2019, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Science merged and the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of RA was established[7]. After the Velvet Revolution (2018), the formation of a new political elite significantly influenced the formation of new perceptions of culture and, as a result, influenced the formation of a new system of cultural policy and, therefore, cultural diplomacy. Thus, in March 2021, during the international conference devoted to cultural diplomacy, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia formulated a new concept of culture as soft power[8]. Besides, the Ministry of ECS and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, there are other actors implementing cultural diplomacy for Armenia such as:

- Educational institutions such as Universities implementing cultural diplomacy through different educational programmes. Educational, scientific and cultural exchange through international programmes of Erasmus, FLEX (Future leaders exchange), IREX, Leaders' school and other programmes
- Local governments implementing cultural diplomacy through different programmes of cultural exchange and tourism development programmes. One of the best examples of cultural diplomacy is the sister-cities relationship. Sister cities establish permanent friendly ties for mutual acquaintance of history and culture. Cooperation between the cities includes economic, political, scientific, cultural, health, tourism, urban management and other aspects. For instance, the political and economic contacts may be backed by the exchange of delegations, students, art and sports teams, the organization of exhibitions, book fairs, the demonstrations of films, etc. For example, Yerevan (the capital) has 24 sister cities[9] and Gyumri (the second city) has 15 sister cities[10].
- Cultural NGOs implementing cultural diplomacy through participation in different international cultural programmes, and hosting and management of international cultural events.

Current cultural diplomacy may be characterized by the following strategies and approaches:

1. Cultural diplomacy as a soft power

More proactivity and state financial participation in the organization of international educational, scientific, sports and cultural programmes and activities. They may include international festivals, summits, scientific and sport competitions and other cultural events aiming at making Armenia a regional cultural centre. E.g. on September 6-11, 2021, "STARMUS FESTIVAL VI" was held for the first time in Armenia under the title "50 Years on Mars", dedicated to the 50th anniversary of the first landing on Mars. The festival had a technological focus and combines science, education, art and technology.

2. Promotion of locally produced knowledge and creative initiatives and exporting ideas.

Armenia is currently actively promoting the establishment of one of its “visit cards” for the children’s centres of innovative technologies “TUMO” outside Armenia and have already helped to open such centres in Paris, Beirut, Moscow, Tirana, Lyon and Kiev. Another Armenian “savoir-faire” is the “Armath” network of engineering laboratories, the idea of which has already been “exported” to the region of Javakheti, Georgia.

[1] <https://escs.am/am/news/6649>

[2] See: <https://escs.am/am/news/4462>

[3] See: / <https://escs.am/am/news/10372>

[4] See: <https://escs.am/am/news/10469>

[5] See: <https://escs.am/am/news/12298>

[6] See: <https://escs.am/am/news/8058>

[7] See: www.arlis.am/documentview.aspx?docid=130615

[8] See:

<https://www.1lurer.am/en/2021/03/24/Armenia-tends-to-make-culture-a-powerful-tool-in-diplomatic-arsenal-Minister-of-Foreign-Affairs/440845>

[9] <https://www.yerevan.am/am/partner/sister-cities>

[10] <http://www.gyumricity.am/hy/gyumri/sister-cities>

1.4.2. EUROPEAN / INTERNATIONAL ACTORS AND PROGRAMMES

Collaboration with European and international agencies, programmes and initiatives have recently become more intensive. Armenia actively participates, or at least is represented, in many pan-European initiatives and programmes, meetings and congresses, exhibitions and competitions. Provision of active representation of Armenian culture, cultural achievements or agents of cultural spheres is becoming a necessary part of Armenian cultural policy trends.

European Union

EU cooperation is conducted on the basis of partnership and cooperation agreements between the EU and the Republic of Armenia that were signed in 1996 and entered into force in 1999. Since June 2004, Armenia, along with Azerbaijan and Georgia, has been participating in the European Neighbourhood Policy, which is an important step for the region towards European integration. Cultural cooperation and promotion of the Armenian cultural heritage are priorities of the cultural policy in the EU-Armenia joint actions programme. Armenia is involved in the Eastern Partnership Culture Programme (since 2010) and aims to strengthen regional cultural links and dialogue between the EU and Eastern countries. Since 2013, Armenia is participating in the European Commission's "Twinning Instrument" programme, which operates in the countries of European

Neighbourhood Policy, giving opportunities to develop administrative skills and to ensure the efficiency of state management.

Armenia continues to participate in different pan-European jointly funded programmes such as Days of European Heritage, Museum Night, Music festivals, Francophonie programmes, etc). Special attention is paid to the individual professional development of actors (Artist in Residence programme). Since 2021, Armenia is part of EU4Culture project, which is currently the biggest regional cultural project (2021-2024). The project aims at promoting culture as an engine for growth and social development across the region, by assisting in implementing Cultural Development Strategies of non-capital cities and towns, providing grants and capacity-building support for complementing those strategies, and organising mobility schemes for artists and culture professionals. Another project (since 2018) is the “European Union National Institutes of Culture” (EUNIC), a global network of EU Cultural Institutes, which unites 36 cultural Institutes from 27 Member States. EUNIC members work in the area of the arts, languages, youth, education, science, society, and development. At a local level, EUNIC members join together in over 100 clusters - in cities and countries - to collaborate on common projects and programmes and to promote the role of culture in the EU's internal and external relations.

Creative Europe Desk Armenia (founded in 2018) operates with the support of the European Commission and Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of the Republic of Armenia. The goal of the Desk is to promote the European Union's programme of cultural grants in Armenia and contribute to the development of the capacity of cultural operators, as well as to disseminate information about the upcoming calls for funding and hosting info days, training and consultations.

UNESCO

One of the trends of Armenia and UNESCO cooperation is having the most important Armenian cultural values and achievements integrated into the world cultural heritage. The Ministry of Education and Culture regularly submits nominations for inclusion in the UNESCO calendar of prominent people and historical events. The list of World material cultural heritage currently includes three Armenian monuments of material (tangible) heritage such as: 1) Temple complexes of Haghpat and Sanahin (as one monument); 2) Cathedral of Etchmiadzin, the churches Hripsimeh, Gayane, Shoghakat and the ruins of the temple of Zvartnots; 3) Gegard Monastery and the Upper Valley of Azat River. Since 2005, pieces of intangible heritage started to be also included in the UNESCO list. The Armenian duduk, traditional bread “lavash”, the Armenian epos "The Daredevils of Sasoun", and the Khachkar ("cross-stone", the medieval religious and cultural monument) were incorporated into the list of World Cultural Heritage. The cooperation with UNESCO in the cultural heritage sphere is also focused on improvements in preservation and management processes through training of specialists. Thus, in 2009, training of museum specialists was organised and conducted.

Council of Europe

Cultural cooperation with the Council of Europe is one of the main directions of Armenian cultural relations. Since 2015, Armenia is part of the Cultural Routes programme launched by the Council of Europe in 1987 with the Declaration of Santiago de Compostela. “The Cultural Routes programme” is an invitation to travel and to discover the rich and diverse heritage of Europe by bringing people and places together in networks of shared history and heritage. They put into practice the values of the Council of Europe: human rights, cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and mutual exchanges across borders. On 13-15 October, the Black Sea Universities

Network Congress of 2021 (BSUN Congress) was held with the theme of 'The Role of Universities in Solving Complex Challenges'. The conference took place in Yerevan, Armenia, and was directed by Professor Vahram Ter Matevosyan of the American University of Armenia.

The Armenian National Agrarian University (ANAU) has just joined the University Network for Cultural Routes Studies. The ANAU offers a number of courses aimed at the development of agrotourism and wine tourism, including Bachelor and Master degree educational programmes in Fermentation Technology, Winemaking, wine marketing, wine tourism, and a special "Enology and Wine Business Programme", the first of its kind in Armenia.

Armenia is also taking part in the programmes of cultural development and cooperation of the INCP (International Network of Cultural Policy), BSEC (Black Sea Economic Cooperation), CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States), and the British Council. It is also part of the Open Society Institute network, which is supporting different cultural programmes such as the organization of cultural events, festivals, performances, panel discussions, lectures, discussions and other such cultural activities that will involve the wider society. In particular, the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Armenia received various grants from OSI for a number of cultural events such as the «Golden Apricot» International Film Festival, the «Nazar» International Theatre Festival, the «Tumanyan Fairy Tale Day» International Theatre Festival, the International Youth Film Festival, and the International Festival «Woman», etc.

1.4.3. NGO'S AND DIRECT PROFESSIONAL COOPERATION

NGOs are playing a significant role in implementation of cultural policies and projects as well as professional cooperation. Different aspects of cultural activities of NGOs are addressed in chapters 1.2.5, 1.2.6, 1.3.1, 1.3.3, and 2.5.5. Within the framework of different projects and activities, described in the listed chapters, Armenian NGOs usually develop active professional cooperation with local and foreign art professionals.

The development of collaboration between art professionals from abroad and local NGOs have become important since the beginning of the Russian-Ukrainian war. Thus, in 2022-23 the Cultural and Social Narratives laboratory NGO funded by the New Democracy Fund is hosting a thematic residency programme for artists, cultural workers, or representatives of related fields, whose main areas of interest include urban space issues, urban memory, and the ways of interpretation of the Soviet urban architecture as an inheritance of the colonial past are invited to apply for the residency programme. The residency is held in the city of Dilijan (Tavush region), where they can also participate in local art life.

2. Current cultural affairs

2.1. Key developments

During three post-revolutionary years (2018-2021), aggravated by the war and the pandemic, the government and the policy makers were busy with the following immediate tasks:

1. Reorganization and optimization of the government structure, reconsideration of main the approaches to the management of education and culture, and development of draft laws in education and museums, which are currently in the process of discussion.
2. The anti-corruption struggle and development of anti-corruption strategies.
3. Reconsideration of funding concepts of infrastructures and activities.

The corrupt and monopolized economic and political system of the first three decades of independence used education and culture not only as an instrument of influence and political manipulation, but also as a means of personal enrichment of its representatives through illegal alienation, privatization and the sale of cultural objects, infrastructures (buildings, spaces) and other properties (for example, the case of some historical buildings that were illegally privatized by Minister Hasmik Hakobyan, etc.), the targeted annihilation of architectural heritage to clear the space for private investments, etc. All this resulted in the decline of infrastructures, and the loss of a significant part of the cultural heritage.

In general, projects implemented by the government since 2018 fall into several conceptual clusters: availability and financial accessibility of education and culture; stronger state control over financial management; modernization and optimization of educational and cultural infrastructures. Thus, a number of projects being implemented is aimed at closer cooperation and symbiosis of education and culture: better access for schoolchildren to theatres, concert halls and museums through special projects of state support for a certain number of tickets per person each year for everyone[1]; state supported encounters of schoolchildren with selected art objects, artists, musicians, and writers[2]; etc. The main problem with those projects is unavailability of a certain choice of cultural institutions and activities for children from provinces, which is to be resolved at the local level. Another project on modernization and restructuring of culture houses in the regions funded by a state foundation “My step” is aimed at the reanimation of cultural life in villages and small towns[3]. All those projects are supposed to change the situation on a short-term basis, until a new, well-grounded and long-term concept of development of education and culture is developed.

By analyzing public discourse on governmental strategies, one may come to a conclusion about the following main challenges in the related spheres:

1. Lack of professionals in the spheres of management of education and culture. Three ministers and even more vice-ministers have already replaced each other and each one of them became an object of severe public criticism. A significant number of employees occupied in the spheres of culture and education demonstrate a poor level of professionalism and motivation, are steeped in corruption and conflicts of interest, with no readiness to improve their performance.
2. A very complicated and unhealthy legal, structural and infrastructural heritage in terms of corrupt networks, contradictory legislation, numerous serious violations and risks to be faced and losses to be

restored, and investigations still to be conducted.

3. The problematic political situation in Armenia, aggravated by the war and the pandemics. Due to serious political challenges currently experienced by the country, the local discourse in whatever field or sphere becomes highly politicised and is being immediately used for political manipulations.

In general, the government is accused of a lack of effort and measures to fight the corruption, resumption of some previous methods of management and unprofessional approaches to reforms and transformations implemented. Thus, the new law on education which had been developing for two years, was recently sent to the Constitutional Court, which considered it not fully adhering to constitutional statements. Some managerial solutions like a structural fusion of some theatres and systemic changes in the management of the Opera House were publicly criticized and even led to public scandals. At the same time, changes of managers, personnel, and a strategic development plan in some museums had a positive impact on the sphere.

[1] see: <https://escs.am/am/news/5819> and <https://escs.am/am/news/5821>

[2] See: <https://escs.am/am/news/5820>

[3] see: <https://mystep.foundation/hy/our-work/188/>

2.2. Cultural rights and ethics

The right to culture is defined as a fundamental human right both in the RA constitution and in a number of RA laws regulating the sphere of culture. Thus, Article 3 of the RA Constitution stipulates: "In the Republic of Armenia, a person is the highest value. The inalienable dignity of a person is the inseparable basis of his rights and freedoms. The respect and protection of basic human and citizen rights and freedoms are the responsibilities of public authorities. Public authority is limited to the basic rights and freedoms of man and citizen as a directly applicable right[1].

The Basic Law on the Fundamentals of Cultural Legislation of RA, adopted in 2002, is the fundamental law from which all other laws and legal decisions on cultural issues derive and its Article 1 claims "to ensure and protect the constitutional right of citizens of the Republic of Armenia to freedom of speech, creativity, and participation in the cultural life of society"[2]. Article 9 of this Law defines the right to participate in cultural life and to carry out cultural activities for every person, "regardless of his nationality, race, gender, language, religion, beliefs, social origin, property or other status" and Article 10 addresses the right to carry out creative activity for everyone, both professionals and non-professionals. Article 11 defines the right to communicate cultural values in all spheres of cultural activity, libraries, museums, archives of the Republic of Armenia and other collections. And Article 12 claims the right to receive an education in Humanities and Arts and to choose the forms and means of education, without age restriction. Article 13 defines the right to expose and export the results of creative activities and Article 14 addresses the right to create cultural organizations. The Law also defines the cultural rights for foreign citizens and stateless persons, which states: "Foreign citizens and stateless persons in the territory of the Republic of Armenia have equal rights and undertake equal obligations with the citizens of the Republic of Armenia in the field of cultural activities, except for the cases defined by law and international agreements." The Law also regulates the relationships between the state and ethnic minorities in the sphere of culture: "The Republic of Armenia supports the preservation and development of the cultural identity of the national minorities living in its territory, through the implementation of state programmes, contributes to the

creation of conditions for the preservation, dissemination and development of their religion, traditions, language, cultural heritage, culture".[3]

The main responsibility for realizing the right to culture is considered to be the authorized state body of the Republic of Armenia represented by the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Armenia and its subordinate NGOs and other organizations.

[1] See: <https://www.arlis.am/documentview.aspx?docID=102510>

[2] See: <http://www.irtek.am/views/act.aspx?aid=19304>

[3] See: <https://www.arlis.am/documentview.aspx?docID=69109>

2.3. Role of artists and cultural professionals

To see how the legislation defines the relationship between the state and art and culture related individuals, one must first refer to the Law on the Basics of Cultural Legislation adopted in 2002, which states: "The state 1) promotes the activities of creative workers aimed at preserving, spreading and developing culture, 2) provides conditions for the work and employment of creative workers, 3) supports the expansion of international creative contacts of creative workers." Put differently, the state is supposed to support the activities of the unions of creative workers, gives them the opportunity to participate in the development of cultural policy, takes into account their suggestions when developing programmes in the fields of employment of creative workers, professional training, job security, and social protection. However, in different periods of Armenian history of the 20th and 21st centuries this kind of relationship between artists and the political power was interpreted and realized differently.

If we try to make a mechanical modelling before the Velvet Revolution (2018) and after, the main analytical outline of cultural policy of RA can be classified as that of the state-bureaucratic model before the liberal-liberal model after the revolution. The involvement of cultural figures, creative workers and representatives of the cultural sector in the process of developing and implementing cultural policy is more evident in 2018-2022, because public debates began to be actively used as a new tool of cultural policy. In 2018 the government's decision on the procedure for holding public debates was adopted[1]. There are a number of examples, that after public debates and active media discussions some policies and laws were withdrawn for further changes and developments, such as the new Law on Education.

However, the role of artists and cultural professionals currently is much less significant than in the periods of the strong ideologisation of political regimes. In the 2000's and early 2010's, the representatives of the so called "creative intelligentsia" were actively used as promoters of nationalist and neo-soviet approaches to culture and education[2] (as it was the case in the Soviet times) and their reputation was significantly decreased. Currently, any really reputable figures among art and culture related individuals influencing the political or civil fields do not seem to exist.

[1] <https://www.e-draft.am/projects/978/about>

[2] Antonyan, Intelligentsia ?

2.4. Digital policy and developments

Preservation and awareness-raising of moveable culture heritage of our country is one of the most important domains of the state cultural policy. Establishing an electronic information database of cultural values (Armenian treasury) which was launched upon the Decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia (2014) "On approving the procedure for establishing an electronic information database of cultural values and the list of organisations providing information to the database" is aimed at the solution of this issue. It is aimed at integrating, in a unified format in a single domain, the moveable cultural heritage of the Republic of Armenia and making it accessible both for the general public and the scientists-researchers studying that wealth. Integrated digitised data on museums, archives and handwritten and printed cultural values of both state storages (museums, libraries, archives) and non-state collections (upon the consent of the owners) are included in the database. The database is aimed at further including Armenian moveable cultural values available in different structures of the world and numerous institutions of the Armenian communities. All this will provide an opportunity to widely raise awareness of the cultural heritage of our country both in Armenia and abroad. 41 organisations under state and community subordination have currently joined the database. Data on around 156 586 cultural values are entered into the database and have been approved. Activities on uploading information to the database were launched in January 2016. The first stage of the process finished in 2020.

Since 2001, the National Library of Armenia carried out activities on establishing an Electronic Union Catalogue of the largest Armenian Libraries, which is available at: <http://armunicat.am:8991/>. The Armenian largest public, marz [regional] and academic libraries have joined the software. It also allows the provision of electronic services to readers. In 2018-2019, digitisation and preservation of 18 Armenian films was ensured through the project "Cinema-photo-phono collections preservation service". Another digitization programme is the "Electronic Library" project, through which Armenian literature, teaching and popular science materials in the Armenian language, books published by the initiative, by order and assistance of the Ministry of Diaspora of the Republic of Armenia were digitised and uploaded on the website. The creation of virtual museums started with the "Virtual Museum of the History of the Armenian Diaspora"[1], exposing online materials and photos concerning the Armenian communities, pan-Armenian organisations and spiritual structures of the Diaspora, concerning Armenia, Armenian Genocide, dictionaries of Armenian names and surnames, Armenian cultural heritage and contributions of eminent Armenians in the world civilisation. To preserve and popularize the Armenian video and audio cultural heritage, digitisation of musical works, films, the so called "Golden Fund" of the Public Radio was implemented through the introduction of the latest technologies. In particular, A. Khzmalyan's collection "Under the question mark" and souvenir collection of Armenian films "The cinema of our independence" were printed, activities on digitising and preserving 31 films are being carried out within the framework of the project "Cinema-photo-phono collections preservation service", radio performance of V. Papazian's "The Rock" and the recordings of Tatevik Sazandaryan's 18 performances kept in "Golden Fund" of the Public Radio were restored and digitised. With a view to ensuring an appropriate level of TV airtime, with the support of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of the Republic of Armenia, the TV programme series of "Cultural Armenia" TV programme (64 programmes) and programmes within the framework of TV programme "On the Roads of Armenia" covering Armenian historical and cultural monuments, cultural centres and cultural events, national traditions, rituals and celebrations (56 programmes), "Arvestakirner" [Carriers of Art] (12 programmes), "Antsanot Yerevan" [Unknown Yerevan] (8 programmes), "Hayic hay" [From Armenian to Armenian] 18 (programmes) and "Octava" (8 programmes) marz [regional] and cultural programme were prepared and broadcast by Public Television. With a goal to identify and promote the creative potential in the

republic, information databases of educational tools for talented teens with and without disabilities, child and youth choirs of Armenia were replenished, as well as information databases of educational items necessary for the operating of fine arts schools and the Department of “Visual Arts” of art schools of the Republic of Armenia were established (2019).

Unfortunately, there is no particular research that would emphasize the trends and indicators of the development of digital policies.

[1] www.armdiasporamuseum.com

2.5. Cultural and social diversity

2.5.1. NATIONAL / INTERNATIONAL INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

In 2007 the Armenian government ratified the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. According to the Convention, each participant country “ensures artists, cultural professionals, practitioners and citizens worldwide can create, produce, disseminate and enjoy a broad range of cultural goods, services and activities, including their own.” The Convention attracts special attention to cultural expressions of minorities and various social groups. According to the last census (2011), the national minorities in Armenia make up 1.9% of the country's population; Yezidis prevail (62%). In line with the Constitution, citizens of Armenia who belong to national minorities have the right to preserve and develop their own customs, language, culture and religious liberties. These rights are reflected in a number of laws, which are being strengthened. The policy on national minorities is based on three fundamental principles: • to promote the preservation of ethnic identity and development of ethnic culture; • to prevent any ethnical discrimination; and • to promote the full integration of the non-Armenian population into the society of Armenia. The adoption of international agreements, the necessary amendments and insertions made to the laws of Armenia, as well as the operation of programmes promoting integration, are directed at the implementation of the above three principles. Under the Law on Fundamentals of Cultural Legislation passed in 2002, Armenia supports the cultural identity protection and development of national minorities residing on its territory. Armenia has joined a number of international and intergovernmental treaties that ensure and protect the multicultural environment of national and language minorities, including the Framework Convention on the Rights of National Minorities and the European Charter on Regional or Minority Languages. They are implemented in Armenia both by national legislation and by including them in cultural, educational, informational and other programmes. Armenia has also passed the Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organisations. A number of non-governmental organisations operate initiatives to benefit national and religious communities. At present, state support is provided for education in national (mother) languages, for the following minorities: Russians, Yazidis, Kurds, Assyrians, partially Greeks, Poles, Germans, and Ukrainians – in the programmes of Armenian higher educational institutions. There are regular radio programmes in Kurdish, Yazidi, Russian, Assyrian, and Georgian languages, which are realised with state support. In the cultural sphere, organisations that function in the educational-cultural development sphere also receive financial and organisational support. The legislative amendments for the protection and development of ethnic identity of non-Armenian residents are ongoing. In recent years, a number of cultural institutions and cultural centres for national minorities were opened in Armenia. Priorities in this sphere include support for ethnic media (about 12 newspapers and magazines are being published in Armenia through communities of ethnic minorities), preservation and promotion of ethnic cultures through publication of books, making films, organisation of art festivals and

rehabilitation of historical and cultural monuments (cemeteries, religious worship sites, etc). Cultural diversity in Armenia is also represented by religious diversity. The Constitution provides freedom of religion (article 23). Currently there are 14 different denominations and churches in Armenia, each having its own religious culture, mentality, specifics of everyday life, and centres of social and cultural life.

2.5.2. DIVERSITY EDUCATION

Since 2018, a new education strategy has been developed and tested in Armenia. On the basis of this strategy, the education development programme for 2022-2030 was accepted in October 2022. It contains a number of serious transformations in terms goals, methodologies, institutional and infrastructural capacities, education and knowledge standards, quality of personnel, and transparency of educational processes[1]. Currently, application of new standards, requirements and the institutional capacity improvement are in progress, although their introduction is gradual and largely discussed by the professional and beneficiary communities, media and social networks.

Along with institutional, ideological, programmatic and methodological changes, the new system of education is supposed to be compatible with the new cultural vision. Although the new cultural policy is not officially developed yet, some strategies have already been developed and introduced. New approaches pay special attention to students' cultural rights and opportunities, as well as accessibility of cultural events and institutions. The analysis of the current situation should be started with the transformation in general understanding of the concept of cultural education. If before 2018 cultural education was represented in the school in a form of secondary disciplines such as art and music, then one of the first educational programmes of the authorities was the state support of the systemic attendance at cultural institutions (theatres, museums, art galleries, etc.) by students (at least three free entries per student). The aim of the such programmes is to turn cultural education into a necessary part of public education, to strengthen the connection between society and culture, individuals and culture connection from school and preschool. Another programme is aimed at making art closer to students. Some masterpieces of national and world art from local museums are being brought to educational institutions, accompanied by specialists lecturing about them. This programme has a limited nature, because of multiple problems of security, etc[2]. However, attending museums and museum education programmes is becoming more and more developed and demanded in schools. Many (but not all yet!) state and community museums have a bunch of different types of educational programmes for schoolchildren of different ages, students of high schools and children with disabilities[3].

Such a strategy is mirroring the policy approaches applied in France in the 1960s, where the basics of cultural education was believed to have to be initiated by the state under the slogan "Culture for everyone"[4].

Also, it has to be mentioned that the local programmes of community development usually contain programmatic activities and strategies of cultural education. Thus, community development plans set the tasks of supporting cultural mobilization and self-expression, and encouraging cultural diversity. However, according to our observations, sometimes plans of cultural development and cultural education in communities turn out not to be successful, because they are often formal, are not based on new approaches to culture and cultural policies, new methodologies and techniques, and just reproduce old patterns that have been already proved to be ineffective. This is a serious gap that needs to be filled in by systemic changes.

The relationships between education and community programmes are presented in more detail in section 5 of

this document.

[1] See: education program, <https://escs.am/am/news/11602>

[2] Reference <https://escs.am/am/static/museumfromhome?s=culture>

[3] See for instance: National Art Gallery, <http://www.gallery.am/hy/classes/>

[4] David L., Cultural policy in France since 1959: arm's length, or 'up close and personal?' // http://fgimello.free.fr/documents/florida/cultural_policy_in_france.pdf

2.5.3. MEDIA PLURALISM AND CONTENT DIVERSITY

Private radio and television broadcasting began to develop only at the beginning of 1990's. Therefore, the regulation of this field started with the adoption of the Law on Television and Radio (2000) and the formation of the National Committee for Television and Radio in 2001. Today, in Armenia, there is one Public TV Company and one Public Radio Company. There are more than 40 private broadcasters, 20 Radio companies, and more than 60 TV companies in Yerevan and the regions. However, the number of public and private radio broadcasters in rural areas is significantly lower compared to the capital Yerevan. There are only three country-wide radio stations, including public radio and three private channels available to citizens living outside of the capital, while radio listeners of the capital city enjoy 21 radio stations, including three public radio channels[1].

The correlation between the Armenian-language material in television broadcasts and foreign-language ones varies, depending on the TV channel, but the averages is about 55%-45% (see also chapter 5.3.7). According to the Law, the same company may not obtain a broadcasting license for the same geographic location for both radio and television. According to amendments to the RA Law on Television and Radio, approved on 20 May 2010, Armenia is to move to digital broadcasting. Frequencies are distributed on a competitive basis, however, until recently no guarantees of the transparency and fair choice were given. The competition was usually claimed to be unfair by the TV companies that were unsuccessful.[2] Since 2018, the situation improved, however, according to the Media Needs Assessment report (2022)[3], in 2019-2020 the independence of the Council of Public Television and Radio Company was still considered a critical area. Although the underlying law has been changed since then, the current legal guarantees do not suffice, either. The governance of the Armenian public media system still lacks a critical set of guarantees for independent functioning and the meaningful realisation of its capacities.

There are press agencies in Armenia that cooperate with CIS member countries and similar world major agencies disseminate everyday information. "Armenpress" is the oldest press agency in Armenia, operating since 1921. Two other agencies that have been formed since 1991 are "Noyan Tapan" and "Arminfo", a private agency. There are also news agencies: "Mediamax", "De Facto", "Arka", "Regnum" and photoagencies: "Photolur" and "Patker". There are 5 daily newspapers, including "Aravot" (Morning), "Azg" (Nation), "Haykakan jamanak" (Armenian Times), and "Hayots Ashkharh" (Armenian World). All of them are private. There are 20 regional newspapers published at least once a month, with an overall circulation of about 10,000 copies. Periodicals are divided into ones supporting the authorities and the opposition press. However, since 2018 political positions of newspapers have changed. Thus, if previously "Haykakan jamanak" (Armenian Times) was one of the leading opposition press outlets, currently it mostly reflects the interests and opinions of the ruling "Civil agreement" party and vice versa the previous pro-governmental Russian-language news-paper "Golos Armenii" or a number

of politically-biased news-papers such as Azg, Hayots Asgkharh, Iravunk are currently positioning themselves as opposition media. A lot of printed and broadcast media belonging to leaders of the previous, pre-revolutionary regime are now also positioning themselves as the opposition ones. Currently, the media situation is unusual in Armenia, as the opposition media are strongly surpassing in number and coverage the pro-government media.

Since Soviet times, there have been publications of children's and youth periodicals. After independence, a number of new periodicals emerged - "Khatutik", "Manana", "Lolo", "Urakh Gnatsk" ("Merry Train"). However, currently some of them no longer exist and the general decrease in the number of children-oriented media may be noticed. In general, the significant decrease in printed media is observed, which is caused by the digital media boom. A big number of printed and broadcast media companies and outlets have switched to online format (Hetq.am, Lragir.am, Tert.am, Azatutyun.am, Iravaban.net, 168.am, Razm.info, Photolure.am, Panarmenian.net, etc.) and new ones (like Boon.TV) were created as online companies. Many media outlets are reported to just reproduce the content of social networks.[4]

Besides the politically-oriented media, there are also social, political, literary and cultural newspapers - "Yerevani Hamaynapatker", "Noyan Tapan" in English, the newspapers "Grakan tert", "Grqeri Ashkharh", as well as the magazines "Garun", "Nor Dar", "Norq", and "Literaturnaya Armenia". There are also thematic periodicals (comics, scientific, philosophical, religious and so on), but they do not have a great number of readers in Armenia. Academic periodicals include those published by the universities ("Banber Yerevani Hamalsarani", "Vestnik RAU", etc), and by the Academia of Sciences ("Lraber Hasarakakan gitutiunneri", "Hayastani bzhshkagitutyun", "Hayastani qimiakan handes", etc.). Academic media are currently undergoing some revision processes on their way to becoming peer-reviewed and to be included in the international databases like Scopus or Web of Science.

Several papers of ethnic minorities are published in Armenia in ethnic languages such as Ezdikhana, Lalesh, "Assyrian news" (in Russian, with two obligatory pages in Assyrian, funded by the Armenian government), "Magen David" (in Russian and partly in Hebrew) and the Russian-language news-papers "Golos Armenii" and "Novoe Vremya". The daily radio programme "Voice of Yerevan" broadcast on Program One is issued in 4 languages, Yezidi - 60 minutes, Kurdish - 30 minutes, Assyrian - 15 minutes and Greek - 15 minutes.

Subscriptions to newspapers and periodicals are low, due to the high prices related to expenses for publication and dissemination and a weak market for advertising. The lack of financial investments for the control of media groups and the small salaries of the journalists also hinder progress in this field. Media are surviving by advertisement and private political investments which increases their political engagement.

[1] Media Needs Assessment report (2022), organised by the Council of Europe, by Dr Krisztina Rozgonyi and Shushan Doydoyan

[2] Diversity report

[3] Media Needs Assessment report (2022), organised by the Council of Europe, by Dr Krisztina Rozgonyi and Shushan Doydoyan

[4] Armenian media in the epoch of Social networks, research report, 2022

2.5.4. LANGUAGE

The Law of the Republic of Armenia on Language was adopted in 1993, under which the state language of the Republic of Armenia is Armenian and the official language is literary Armenian. The second language is Russian, which the majority of the population still speak, though the number of people having a good command of Russian has significantly decreased. Among the new generation, the number of people with knowledge of other foreign languages, particularly English, French and German, is gradually increasing. The Language State Inspectorate, attached to the Ministry of Science and Education, manages the language policy, decides the criteria and controls the execution of the Language Law. Compared with the Soviet period, the usage of the Russian language has noticeably declined, although Russian is still taught in secondary and higher education institutions, the Russian press and literature is published, Russian radio programmes are broadcast, and some private TV channels broadcast Russian-speaking films without Armenian subtitles. In Armenia, which is described as being a language homogenous country, many foreign language papers and magazines have been published, such as the Russian "Golos Armenii", "Novoye Vremya", "Literaturnaya Armenia", "Yerevan", "Afisha", "Armyanka" magazines, Yazidi "Lalesh", "Ezdikhana" ("The voice of Yazidis" in Armenian), Ukrainian "Dnipro-Slavutich", and "Magen David" ("The star of David" in Russian) of the Jewish community. Currently, there are no major issues in Armenia relating to foreign languages and other cultures. Since the Soviet times, the Russian language has been considered the main language of interethnic communication among the nations of the previous USSR. Since 1990's, English is strengthening its positions as the main language of international communication. Besides the English language, a number of other foreign languages are taught in the institutes of higher education and there are centres that teach French, Spanish, German and Italian, and cultural unions operate. Armenia is a member of the Francophone countries Association and the festival of Francophonie was held in Armenia in 2021. The existing legislation does not prohibit the language usage of minorities; the state language supremacy is in harmony with the language preservation of national minorities, the international right of mutual respect towards all cultures and the language-political norms of the European Union. In general, each non-Armenian resident of Armenia freely enjoys the entire international and national rights provided for national minorities, but the state offers additional financial support only to the national minorities that meet certain guidelines. These guidelines are developed on the basis of the main principle that if a national minority in any settlement is 15% or more of the population and, if in any small settlement with a population of 2 000 people, the national minority is represented by at least 300 people, then this minority will receive financial support from the state budget to realise their educational, identity protection and other programmes. In Armenia, the Russian, Yazidi and Assyrian ethnic communities meet these guidelines.

2.5.5. GENDER

The law "On the Fundamentals of Cultural Legislation" (2002) guarantees equal rights for everyone regardless of their nationality, race, sex, language, religion, beliefs, social origin, property, and another status, as is an inalienable right of every person to participation in the cultural life of the society and carrying out cultural activities in the territory of the Republic of Armenia. In addition, everyone has a right to creativity, both professionally and as an amateur, as well as everyone having a right to communicate cultural values, and to use any available state cultural resources in accordance with the legislation of RA.

Current priorities of the Government of the Republic of Armenia in the sphere of culture include ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men to freely participate in [cultural] life, to enjoy the benefits of their own creation, and to freely interact with cultural values. Some positive results have been recorded during the

implementation of the law: introduction of gender expert examination of laws; secondary legal acts, policies and programmes in the culture sector concerning the participation of women; development of analytical tools for the purpose of establishing gender perspectives in the cultural policy; encouraging the positive coverage of gender issues in the print media and publishing and promoting the spread of ideas of equality between men and women; creation of educational and methodological complexes for teaching gender subjects in the form of textbooks and methodological manuals; inclusion of the gender component in the state policy in the culture sector; targeted support of social programmes dedicated to the issues of gender equality in the audiovisual sectors (cinema, theatre, advertising) within the framework of state order financing; - Introduction of gender knowledge in the training system of cultural workers.

However, there are still some important gaps, e.g. the absence of gender policy in the dissemination of financial resources and creation of new opportunities in the cultural field; the absence of gender equality component monitoring in the cultural sphere; strategic understanding of culture as national culture. Civil society organizations sustain (though chaotic, uneven, sometimes poorly organized) discourse on gender equality, the role, and importance of women's engagement in the cultural field. The main points of the discourse are that women are not only quantitatively equal but are often decision-makers and culture is an innovative tool for the development of the creative potential of society, for the development of civil society.

It can be stated that although the spheres of education and culture are the most feminized in Armenia this does not lead to a more positive picture of gender equality, but quite the opposite. These are spheres where labour is low paid and requires a lot of effort in return. Workers in the field do not acquire either social or economic significant capital. Sometimes the feminization of industries leads to a devaluation of these industries themselves, which are perceived in society as “not a male occupation,” that is, not profitable enough and not serious enough. Though unequal remuneration based on gender is prohibited by the RA law “Providing equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men,” the recent research on the gender pay gap in Armenia made by UN Women[1] shows that the issue continues to be vital in the country and there is a 23% pay gap in all spheres and occupations in Armenia.[2]

A subject for misperceptions was the ratification process of the Istanbul Convention in Armenia. The process started in 2017, when the Government of Armenia approved the signing of the Convention on December 28 with the initiative of the Council of Europe. It caused a wave of public and far-right non-parliamentary political parties' unrest, which stated that the eradication of prejudices, traditions, customs and all other phenomena based on the stereotypical division of men and women is a major threat to Armenian society and is destroying the national value system.[3]

One of the most important reflections on the Velvet Revolution of 2018 and the women's role and importance within these events led to the Armenian exposition in the 2019 Viennese Biennale, where for the first time in the history of Armenian contemporary art, the country was represented by the predominantly feminist theme[4].

Despite the significant improvement in the legal field, the LGBT community in Armenia still faces legal and social challenges not experienced by non-LGBT residents, due in part to the lack of laws prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity and in part to prevailing [negative attitudes](#) about LGBT persons throughout society. Some NGOs and public initiatives in Armenia actively try to change the situation. Thus, Queering Yerevan Collective, a group of women artists, philosophers, translators, researchers and writers advocating for LGBTQ+ rights and freedoms in the Armenian cultural and art field or FemLibrary Center, a

feminist initiative aimed at creating alternative art and international exchange of artists and queer activists from Armenia, Georgia, Belarus, Ukraine, Greece, Germany, USA, France, etc, or 4PLUS, a women photographers' organization may be mentioned as successful examples[5].

[1] Armenia Country Gender Equality brief, UN Women report, 2019

[2] Gender Analysis of the Cultural Field in Armenia prepared by CSN Lab – Sona Kalantaryan, Tigran Amiryanyan, 2021 // https://www.newdemocracyfund.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2022/07/GA_Armenia.pdf

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

2.5.6. DISABILITY

In 2010 the Republic of Armenia ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 30 of which refers to cultural life, recreation, participation in entertainment and sports activities. The convention, in particular, states: «1. States Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to take part on an equal basis with others in cultural life, and shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that persons with disabilities: (a) Enjoy access to cultural materials in accessible formats; (b) Enjoy access to television programmes, films, theatre and other cultural activities, in accessible formats; (c) Enjoy access to places for cultural performances or services, such as theatres, museums, cinemas, libraries and tourism services, and, as far as possible, enjoy access to monuments and sites of national cultural importance. 2. States Parties shall take appropriate measures to enable persons with disabilities to have the opportunity to develop and utilize their creative, artistic and intellectual potential, not only for their own benefit, but also for the enrichment of society.» However, joining the convention does not mean being able and institutionally capable to implement it. As a significant part of cultural institutions were built in soviet and pre-soviet times, they were not designed for people with mobility problems or other disabilities. Many of state or public cultural organizations did not have additional resources, both financial and material to make themselves compatible with the convention, to develop new approaches and strategies. Significant changes in this field were made possible in 2021, when the new Law on Persons with Disabilities was finally adopted.[1] This law is to provide favorable conditions for the implementation of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights and freedoms for persons with disabilities, on an equal basis with other persons, guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia, as well as in accordance with the universally recognized principles and norms of international law, international treaties ratified by the Republic of Armenia, ensuring their equal participation and effective social inclusion in public life. This law replaced the old law on social protection of disabled persons adopted in 1993[2], which did not fully comply with the norms of international law. The newly adopted law derives from the main principles of the mentioned UN Convention[3].

However, the situation is still far from being significantly improved. In order to integrate people with disabilities into cultural life, to meet their cultural needs, it is important to provide full physical access to cultural institutions, as well as take measures for relevant adaptations such as tangible or audible descriptions of art pieces in galleries, subtitles for films, sign language translation for theatres, etc. In the meantime, there are very few performances and concerts adapted for people with hearing, visual or other types of disabilities. Some cultural institutions still remain physically inaccessible, which prevents people with disabilities from actively

participating in cultural life.

They also experience problems with expression of their creative potential. In particular, there are almost no art groups in Armenia (theatre, painting, song, dance and other art groups), adapted for people with disabilities. However, some efforts are being taken to solve the above mentioned problems. According to the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Armenia, the problem of physical accessibility and infrastructures has been already solved in the number of institutions such as the Museum-Institute of the Armenian Genocide, Museum of Komitas, M. Saryan's House Museum, the Tchaikovsky Secondary Music Vocational School and some others. The process is going to be consistent. Within the framework of the recently launched programme of social inclusion of persons with disabilities (2018), the "Special Creative Centre for Children" (SNOC), with branches in Yerevan, Lori, Shirak and Gegharkunik provinces, have been implementing the aesthetic and handicraft training programme for 614 children with disabilities.

[1] <https://www.arlis.am/documentview.aspx?docID=152960>

[2] <https://www.arlis.am/documentview.aspx?docID=90419>

[3] <https://www.arlis.am/documentview.aspx?docID=64762>

2.6. Culture and social inclusion

Cultural and social inclusion underwent noticeable changes in the RA cultural policy after the Velvet revolution (2018), when the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Armenia and other infrastructures of the state system (for example, the Ministry of Social Affairs) began to develop a series of joint cultural inclusion programmes, targeting pensioners, schoolchildren and the disabled.

Schoolchildren

The school subscription system implementation programme is intended for students and teachers of grades 1-12 of state public schools. The implementation of the system, launched in 2018 guarantees to each student and teacher one free entry to three cultural institutions (a museum, a theatre, a concert hall) during the school year. The goal of the project is to promote school - cultural institution connection, to contribute to the artistic education and aesthetic development of children and teenagers. Within the first months of November-December 2018, more than 40 000 students and teachers had visited the museums and other cultural institutions. This figure is persistently increasing. Museums and theatres are more frequently visited organizations, and concert halls less. Thus, through the subscription system, more than 386,000 students studying in RA public schools can participate in the cultural event of their community or any other city of RA.

Pensioners

In the 2019-2023 five-year development plan of Yerevan city, the problem of social inclusion of pensioners and disinherited elderly has been raised and possible solutions addressed. Article 10 of this programme envisages "the creation of day care and entertainment centres in each administrative region for lonely and disinherited elderly and socially insecure pensioners"[1].

In 2018, a project to give pensioners opportunities of visiting concert halls and theatres for free was developed. It was implemented in October-December 2018, but revealed a number of problems with escorting pensioners, as many of them could not attend cultural institutions alone and the inclusion of pensioners in regional and rural areas required expensive transportation. The programme was suspended.

Disabled people

Social and cultural inclusion of people with disabilities is carried out not only through state programmes, but also through a number of public organizations. By signing the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (PWD), the Government of the Republic of Armenia has taken over the responsibilities to support, protect and ensure the full exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all persons with disabilities[2].

By ratifying the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on October 22, 2010, the RA authorities undertook to implement the obligations specified by the Convention, Article 30 of which refers to cultural life, recreation, participation in entertainment and sports activities.

Many non-governmental organizations deal with the cultural and social problems of people with disabilities, and as a result of getting to know the issues raised by them, the corresponding policy is developed in order to ensure the integration of people with disabilities into society. Significant changes in this field also became noticeable after the revolution in RA. In 2021, the RA Law on Persons with Disabilities was adopted[3].

The purpose of this law is to provide favorable conditions for the realization of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights and freedoms for persons with disabilities, on an equal basis with other persons, guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia, as well as in accordance with the universally recognized principles and norms of international law, international treaties ratified by the Republic of Armenia, ensuring their equal participation and effective social inclusion in public life. This law replaced the RA law on social protection of disabled persons adopted in 1993[4], which did not comply with the norms of international law. In order to integrate into cultural life, to meet one's own cultural needs, it is important to have physical access and accessibility to cultural institutions, such as adaptations like picture descriptions in galleries, subtitles for films, sign language translation for theatres, alternative books for people with intellectual disabilities.

Meanwhile, there are almost no performances and concerts adapted for people with hearing, visual or other types of disabilities. Furthermore, the inaccessibility of cultural facilities prevents people with disabilities from participating in cultural life. In particular, there are almost no art groups in Armenia (theatre, painting, song, dance and other art groups) in which people with disabilities will be involved. Along with that, there are still cultural institutions that are not accessible for people with disabilities to enter and exit, as well as for their free movement within the mentioned buildings. Moreover, specially adapted areas for people with locomotor, as well as hearing and visual problems are not provided at all in the halls of a number of cinemas, theatres and other cultural structures. There are no bathrooms adapted to the needs of people with disabilities. Certain steps have been taken to solve the above problems. Just recently the mentioned problems (free movement and bathrooms) has been solved in the Museum-Institutes of the Armenian Genocide and Komitas, M. Saryan's House Museum, Yerevan P. In the Tchaikovsky Secondary Music Vocational School and 7 of the 29 cultural organizations are located on the first floor. Within the framework of the programme of social inclusion of persons with disabilities, which started in 2018, the "Children's Special Creative Centre" SNOC implemented the

aesthetic and craft training programme in Yerevan, Lori, Shirak and Gegharkunik marzes, within the framework of which free arts and crafts training was organized for 614 children with disabilities in 12 specialties.

[1] See:

<https://www.yerevan.am/uploads/media/default/0001/96/47e1986386f7c83ef76ba01ff53f3411cfa11b44.pdf>

[2] <https://www.arlis.am/documentview.aspx?docID=64762>

[3] <https://www.arlis.am/documentview.aspx?docID=152960>

[4] <https://www.arlis.am/documentview.aspx?docID=90419>

2.7. Societal impact of arts

As some research shows, the presence of arts is linked to increased neighborhood livability, community identity, and social wellbeing[1]. This is true for Armenia as well. As a result of needs assessments for different communities, many of them name among their main problems that hinder their well-being, the absence of cultural/art institutions, cultural/art education and cultural/art activities for children, youth and the older people. Thus, projects for the renovation of cultural houses are frequent among the projects implemented in the framework of the state programme of infrastructural subventions to communities and their number increase yearly (4 - 2018, about 50 - 2019, about 90 - 2020)[2]. Cultural houses are usually only spaces for the organization of art classes and cultural events in the regions and their presence obviously improves the quality of life. Projects for the creation of community centres funded by the “My Step” Foundation also include art components to positively impact life in the remote communities.

After the second Karabakh war (2020) one of the tools and mechanisms to help psychological rehabilitation of the displaced children and children living in the border-zone were art classes, theatrical performances, exhibitions and musical concerts. The street art on war thematics like portraits of killed soldiers on the walls of houses where they lived or schools where they learned, supported by private donors or even schools and municipalities has become one of the memorial practices to alleviate the grief of parents and friends.

[1] <https://www.artsfund.org/social-impact-study-2018/>

[2] <https://mtad.am/pages/subvention>

2.8. Cultural sustainability

Consistent works have been carried out to value and appreciate culture as sustainable development potential. The role of culture in economic stability, preservation of national identity, formation of the civil society and social capital in the country, preservation of peace, cultural diversity is studied. The Government Programme of the Republic of Armenia which includes provisions concerning the economy, urban development, healthcare, nature protection, culture and other sectors, and is aimed at the development of tax policy and administration, institutional modernisation and development of infrastructures of the country. The successful implementation of the cultural policy firstly depends on the principle of state budgeting. The financing of the cultural sector is carried out on the basis of programme budgeting, the priority areas of which derive from laws of the Republic of

Armenia in force, decisions of the Government of the Republic of Armenia, as well as the system of measures designated by the sustainable development programme. The whole chain of “drafting — planning — budgeting” of those policies is implemented through triennial medium-term state expenditure frameworks, in the elaboration, financing, organisation, monitoring of which the civil society representatives in the composition of sectoral professional boards of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of the Republic of Armenia are engaged. In the field of Culture the revenues geared down to the potential of economic growth are the revenues received from cultural services rendered to the public that mostly generate from the sales of tickets to theatre goers, concert goers and to exhibition visitors, the lease of halls, premises, lending of drawings, bibliographic and indexing services, sales of books, newspapers, etc. From the point of view of building the capacities of national minorities and human capital, ensuring their education, importance is attached also to many non-governmental organisations and cultural centres of national minorities operating in the Republic of Armenia, the aim of which is to nurture national consciousness, preserve and develop the mother tongue, literature, history and culture. Inclusive creative measures and targeted educational programmes for full-fledged integration of vulnerable groups into the cultural life, providing conditions for their further creative development and progress, creating self-manifestation opportunities, as well as building a climate of tolerance in the public are implemented in the sector.

2.9. Other main cultural policy issues

One of the main problems in Armenia is the underdeveloped academic field of cultural policy studies. This branch of social and political science is new in RA; it has not formed yet the academic language and forms of public presentation of academic achievements. Thus, concepts of cultural polity, cultural policy, cultural politics established in the English-language literature do not have a terminological difference in Armenian, so this problem is still to be solved. On the other hand, weak interaction of public, political and academic fields prevent policy-makers from actively involving academicians in the policy development process and strategic thinking.

3. Cultural and creative sectors

3.1. Heritage

The cultural policy of RA is aimed at preserving and popularizing the historical and cultural heritage, ensuring broad public participation in cultural life, implementing broad cultural propaganda and encouraging the flow of citizens to cultural institutions[1]. The programme objectives of the Government in the field of cultural heritage are to:

- introduce modern management systems in museums, libraries and other cultural heritage institutions;
- implement cultural programmes (festivals, master classes, etc.) in order to transfer knowledge, technical and technological skills, abilities from the bearers of intangible cultural heritage;
- improve the legal framework in the field of immovable monuments of history and culture, clarify the rights and responsibilities of state administration, regional administration and local self-government bodies, private investors and the relationships between them, improve the mechanisms for granting the use of immovable monuments of history and culture and encourage financial investment flows;
- in cooperation with international organizations and the private sector, improve tourism infrastructure development programmes, to support the increase of Armenia's access to the international tourism market;
- support the development of tourism in communities, the restoration of local traditions;
- create an information database for the preservation of intangible cultural heritage.

One of the main directions of the cultural policy of RA is also the protection of the intangible cultural heritage, its publicization, the study of cultural practices and their dissemination, etc.

The Law on Intangible Cultural Heritage of RA defines it as the customs, traditions, rites, forms of ideas and expressions, knowledge and skills, recognized by the public, groups, and in some cases by individuals as part of their cultural heritage. Intangible cultural values also refer to folklore, language, dialects and sayings, place names, content of emblems and other national symbols, traditional crafts, national customs, traditions, holidays, rituals, social life, forms and rules of behaviour, folk art, the economy, and the cultural information stored in scientific and educational institutions, archives, libraries, legal entities and individuals.

Recently, intangible heritage has been the subject of serious transformations, however the interest toward it, especially among the youth is increasing. This is evidenced by the number of activities, programmes and multi-disciplinary activities of non-governmental organizations aimed at the preservation of heritage, singing, dancing, handicrafts, folk theatre groups, etc.

Currently, state policy RA on the protection, protection and popularization of intangible heritage is regulated on the basis of RA laws and UNESCO international conventions. Thus,

in 2006 The Republic of Armenia ratified UNESCO's Convention "On the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage" (2003).[2]

In 2009 the National Assembly of RA adopted the Law "On Intangible Cultural Heritage", which regulates the

legal relations arising during the processes of preservation of intangible cultural heritage including the processes of inventory, preparation of lists, identification, documentation, research, application, restoration of intangible cultural values, protection of property rights to these values, preservation of the cultural heritage of the Republic of Armenia, international cultural cooperation, cultural communication of the peoples of the Republic of Armenia and other states, defines the rights and responsibilities of individuals and legal entities in that field, as well as the authorities of state bodies.

The following applications of the Republic of Armenia were registered in the representative list of the intangible cultural heritage of humanity of UNESCO: "Duduk and his music" (2008), "Art of cross stones. The knowledge on khachkar and khachkar making" (2010), "Sasna tsrer or performance manifestations of the epic of David of Sassoon" (2012), "Lavash. traditional bread preparation, significance and cultural manifestations in Armenia" (2014), "Kochari. traditional group dance" (2017), "Armenian calligraphy and its cultural manifestations" (2019)[3]. The permanent research on tangible and intangible cultural heritage of the Republic of Armenia is being carried out by numerous academic and cultural institutions of Armenia such as the Yerevan State University, Institutes of Archeology and Ethnography, Art, Literature, Language of the National Academy of Sciences, "Hovhannes Sharambeyan Center of Folk Creativity", "Museum of Wood Art", "Yeghishe Charents", Museum of Literature and Art" SNOCs, etc.

As a result of the 44-day Artsakh war of 2020, the preservation and protection of the Armenian heritage became a primary issue for RA considering the Azerbaijani ambitions to destroy and expropriate the Armenian cultural heritage. Taking into account these dangers, after 2020, a number of organizations aimed at the preservation of cultural heritage were formed: "Monitoring of the Cultural Heritage of Artsakh", "Monitoring of the Heritage of the Caucasus", "Save Armenian Monuments", "Monuments of Artsakh" and others. The main goal of such organizations and programmes is to publicize the Armenian heritage of Artsakh, organize international monitoring and control over the preservation of Armenian heritage by using all possible mechanisms.

[1] <https://escs.am/am/news/4415>

[2] <https://www.arlis.am/DocumentView.aspx?DocID=3139>

[3] [https://ich.unesco.org/en/lists?text=&country\[\]=00014&multinational=3&display1=inscriptionID#tabs](https://ich.unesco.org/en/lists?text=&country[]=00014&multinational=3&display1=inscriptionID#tabs)

3.2. Archives and libraries

As of October 2022, the previous number of libraries in the territory of the Republic of Armenia (675) had shrunk to 370[1], 12 of which are managed by the Ministry, and the rest by the municipal authority, including 35 accredited libraries[2]. Shortening the number of libraries depended on the ongoing process of consolidation of administrative communities and optimization of the community management and funding processes.

Currently, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport considers the preservation and development of libraries operating in the territory of Armenia as one of the primary tasks, including:

- ensuring long-term preservation and accessibility of printed heritage,
- creating a more comfortable environment for intellectual entertainment centres and readers,
- the safe preservation of library collections, their use, their restoration, targeted replenishment, digitization

- of ancient books, periodicals of cultural significance and unique book specimens with minimal circulation,
- popularization of the literary heritage of Armenia and Armenians published and preserved abroad,
- training of personnel with professional knowledge in line with current requirements in the library sector.

The programme "Creation of a Digitization Centre and Public Electronic Reading Room in the National Library" launched in 2012 in the National Library of Armenia continues introducing modern information technologies in the libraries of the Ministry and increasing the efficiency of the services provided. It included digitization of the collections of printed press, books and periodical editions published before 1960, which is about to be finalized. The digitalized versions can be found at the sites "Armenian Periodical Press" (www.tert.nla.am) and "Armenian book" (www.haygirk.nla.am).

Library development initiatives include programmes providing access to people with disabilities, such as the "Family Librarian" programme (the Lori and Shirak provinces of RA), that provides library services for people with mobility difficulties and disabilities at home, The "Arev" information communication programme provides reading opportunities for those who are blind or partially sighted with Braille and audio books, etc. Currently, the re-equipment of community libraries is being implemented within the framework of the "Development of the material and technical base of public libraries" programme. It also envisages the purchase of 70,000 new books for provincial libraries[3].

National Archive of Armenia

The archival work in Armenia was started in 1923. In 1963, all of the main cities' archives of Armenia were centralized under the management of the State Central Archives and were tuned into its branches. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the country-members of the Cooperation of Newly Independent States (CIS) agreed on the development of international cooperation in archival work. In 1996, along with fundamental changes in the administrative territorial division, the system of archives also underwent some structural changes. According to the decision of the Prime-Minister in 1996, 6 central and state archives of Yerevan city and 10 marzes of the republic, with their 41 branches, started operating in the system of the Archives Department. In 2002 the department of archival affairs under the RA government was reorganized as a separate division of the archival affairs agency of the staff of the RA Ministry of Culture, Youth Affairs and Sports. 2004 was marked by further improvement of the legislative field of archival affairs of the Republic. The National Assembly adopted the new Law of the Republic of Armenia "On Archival Affairs". During the next 15 years, the RA government also carried out radical systemic reforms in the sector. Currently, the "National Archive of Armenia" state non-commercial organization has 11 regional (including Yerevan city) branches and 29 territorial representations operating under its direct authority. As per 2006, archival funds counted 1, 5,759 collections with 3,419,353 storage units.

[1] <https://armenpress.am/arm/news/1094276/>

[2] <https://escs.am/am/static/libraries?s=culture>

[3] <https://escs.am/am/news/14022>

3.3. Performing arts

The government programme for 2021-2026 sets the following goals for the performing arts:

- creation of skills and resources for the development of marketing strategies, segmentation, and targeting in organizations of the field,
- creation of fund-raising capacities and mechanisms in cultural institutions,
- optimization of state non-commercial organizations, centralization of financial means and professional resources, professional development of a capacity building programme and corresponding legal acts,
- establishment and strengthening of institutions of producers and directors,
- development of qualitative and quantitative standards of the effectiveness of organizations,
- Formation of a loyal, permanent audience (audience),
- Development and activation of the institute of art critics,
- creation of a favorable environment for creative, talented individuals
- introduction and establishment of the institute of art patronage, development of the legislative framework for it, - formation of mechanisms of public opinion and state encouragement of art patronage,
- improvement of material and technical foundations of cultural institutions, aimed at the achievement of high-value artistic results (audio and video equipment, musical instruments, stage equipment, furnishing of halls and stages, heating, security systems),
- analysis and mapping of material resources and professional potential of creative unions.

In accordance with some goals and tasks of the programme, a number of state support programmes are being implemented.

Cinema

Since 2012, the National Cinema Centre of Armenia has been a member of the European audiovisual observatory, ensuring participation in the observatory's activities and conferences on specialized audiovisual art issues. In 2016 Armenia became a member of the board of the Eurimage Foundation. Throughout four years of membership, Armenia has been able to present annually internationally competitive film projects that have received grants from a European foundation.

In cooperation with the professional structures for cinematography, grant programmes for the discovery and encouragement of young creative potential and state support in the field of cinematography are being developed. In order to decentralize cultural activities, the programme "Regional Film Screenings" is implemented to make people from regions familiar with Armenian film art.

In recent years, the international film festivals of "Golden Apricot", "ReAnimania", "Rolan" children's films, "Kin", "Apricot Tree" documentaries and "ONE SHOT" short films have been organized in Armenia with the support of the state (interrupted during the war and pandemic of 2020-2021). They have already become traditional and well-known in the regional and international arena.

In 2018, the "Gaiff Pro" regional film market, which promotes the factor of international cooperation, was launched alongside the "Golden Apricot" Yerevan International Film Festival.

In the same year, the "Hamo Bek-Nazar: Classics of Armenian Cinema" project was launched by the "National Cinema Centre of Armenia", within the framework of which, thanks to international cooperation, the heritage of Armenian cinema is being restored and digitized.

Since 2019, the "National Film Centre of Armenia" SNOC has implemented a new regulation on "Contesting and financing of film projects", the provisions of which are in line with international standards and regulate effective cooperation between film producers and the state, as well as promoting international cooperation.

Since 2019, a new independent artistic council has also been operating in "Hayk Documentary Film Studio" state non-profit organization, which is guided by the principle of selecting only quality film projects and practices in accordance with international standards.

Since 2019, the draft RA Law "On Cinematography" is being developed, which should regulate the principles and main directions of state policy in the field of cinematography, international cooperation, as well as the procedure and conditions for providing state support to cinematography.

Theatre

There are more than 50 theatre organizations operating in Armenia: theatres operating under state, community, city government and independent theatre groups.

With the Ministry's annual and medium-term expenditure programmes, theatre buildings and structures are renovated, equipped with modern light and sound equipment, support is provided for the participation of theatre collectives in international competitions and festivals, works of modern playwrights are acquired, and complex programmes promoting the development of theatre art are developed and implemented.

For decades, international festivals have been held in the field: "Hayfest", "Armmono" mono performances, "Tumanian fairy tale day" puppet theatres, "Theatrical Lori", Yerevan Shakespearean International Theatre and L. International pantomime festivals named after Yengibaryan.

The sphere of theatre art is regulated by the laws of the Republic of Armenia "On the Basics of Cultural Legislation" and "On State Non-Commercial Organizations". In December 2007, the draft of the RA Law "On Theatre and Theatrical Activities" was presented to the RA National Assembly for discussion. Yerevan State Institute of Theatre and Cinema has branches in Vanadzor, Gyumri and Goris, as well as Kh. Armenian State Pedagogical University named after Abovyan. Fifteen theatres are operating under the management of the Ministry of Education and Culture, including both drama and musical theatres. The significant budget increase allowed a significant increase in the number of performances. Thus, the number of performances of the National Opera and Ballet theatre has increased from 68 (2013) to approximately 180 (2021) yearly.

3.4. Visual arts and crafts

The visual arts include painting, sculpture, graphics, and photography. There are more than 1 000 professionals in the sphere of visual arts in Armenia. After the collapse of the Soviet system of state protectionism of arts, many artists and artisans found themselves in a rather difficult situation without state support and unfamiliar with the new ways of marketing their art. "Marketisation" of art resulted in drastic changes for the whole sphere.

A comparatively favourable situation was created for artisanry and handicrafts which quickly found their niche in the tourism consumption market. The most negative impact was imposed by the rupture of all old links and connections of institutions and individuals representing the Armenian Art with their foreign colleagues and counterparts, caused by the lack of financial capacities and lack of higher professionals. Armenian artists lost their privileged status and state support. Currently, arts are promoted and marketed through private galleries (10) and interested individuals, which nevertheless have rather limited capacities. In the absence of targeted state support in technical, financial and other issues, very few of the Armenian artists are able to reach international recognition, though many of them are really talented and deserve to be represented at the highest levels of the international art market. Another issue is preservation and continuity of the Armenian traditions of visual art from the Middle-Ages, and 19-20th centuries. During 2000-2021 the situation was stabilized due to private entrepreneurship, patronage of art by local oligarchs and affluent members of the Diaspora. Thus, a number of museums and galleries were renovated by the Lincy Foundation, established by the American billionaire Kirk Kerkorian. However, overwhelming corruption and the lack of a systemic approach reduced all efforts to a minimum. Although the state strategy plan of 2007-2011 for visual arts envisioned some systemic developments, most of them remained on paper.

After the Velvet revolution, there was a need to address old problems, corruption and chronic mis-funding in the sphere of visual arts. Thus, the Creative Unions were revised, audited and their management changed. All these measures brought a reanimation of their activities. Thus, currently, The Union of Artists of Armenia is organizing more than 100 events yearly, exhibitions, master-classes, etc[1].

The strategic plan for 2021-2025[2] envisioned some developments for modern art, such as:

- formation of marketing, segmentation, targeting, positioning knowledge and resources in organizations of the sector,
- creation of fund-raising capacities and mechanisms in cultural institutions
- optimization of state non-commercial organizations, concentration of financial resources and professional resources, development of a professional capacity development programme and legal acts,
- establishment and strengthening of institutes of producers and directors,
- the development of qualitative and quantitative standards for the effectiveness of the organizations' activity,
- formation of loyal, permanent audiences,
- formation and activation of the Institute of Art Critics,
- formation of the institution of activities of self-employed (independent) creators (artists); clarification of legal, socio-economic status and relations,
- creation of a favorable environment for creative, talented individual artists,
- the introduction and establishment of an institution for the unity of culture, the formation of the legislative framework and legal regulations in the field,
- the formation of the public rating of the single entity, the state encouragement of the single entity,
- improvement of property and material-technical base of cultural institutions, provision of high-value artistic output (property) (lighting equipment, musical instruments, stage equipment, furnishing of halls and stages, heating, security systems),
- analysis and mapping of property resources and professional potential of creative unions.

It must be noted, that serious shortening of corruption practices and more transparency in art institutions led to

more effective management of resources and a more active environment. The pandemic and the Second Karabakh war of 2020 have seriously affected the sphere and currently it is still in the reanimation process. The waves of immigration from Russia after the beginning of Russian-Ukrainian war of 2022 also impacted the sphere by bringing in a lot of specialists in visual arts.

[1] Interview with Suren Safaryan, the current head of the Union of Artists, <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/31686769.html>

[2] <https://www.gov.am/am/gov-program/>

3.5. Cultural arts and creative industries

3.5.1. GENERAL DEVELOPMENTS

Crafts and art industries sector has been mainstays of Armenian national culture since Soviet times. Armenian artisans, jewelers, and souvenir-makers have been traditionally well-known in the region and beyond. Stone-carving, jewelry, carpet-weaving, lace-making, embroidery, ceramics, and other crafts are among those crafts and arts the Armenian artisans are specialized in. In the Soviet times the activities of artisans, training, and the centralized trade of art industries products were regulated by the Professional or Creative Unions. In the post-Soviet time, crafts and art industries fell out of the state regulations and control and developed according to the market, especially tourism market trends. In 2014 authorities recognized the need to encourage private investments with public regulation mechanisms. The Culture Development strategy 2008-2012 already contained some relevant goals, but lacked an associated action plan and evaluation. It stated freedom of cultural and creative activities; self-dependence of cultural organisations; development of new model on decentralisation of management and multi-source finance; and the inclusion of an annual mandatory line in the budget to obtain/purchase cultural and creative products. This new policy orientation resulted in some pilot projects in smaller towns and regions such as Goris, Gyumri and Sisian. However, new policies did not reflect the whole situation and systemic problems and a gap remained between policy-makers and the sector professionals, preventing their interests and visions to be discussed and their feedback to be reflected upon and integrated into policy-making. Lack of transparency, access to information on cultural projects as well as lack of clear vision of systemic approaches by policy-makers seriously affected the development of the field. Similarly, professional unions did not reflect young practitioners or new creative areas' expectations and interests, and were not going to take over a needed advocacy role. Nevertheless, there have been some "business" hubs or centres taking over the role of promoters of creative industries such as business centres in the American University of Armenia, and Sharambeyan's centre in Dilijan (Tavoush province).

Along with the development of tourism, the sector gradually becomes more interesting for private donors: Diaspora and international organisations' investments (USAID, OCDE, UN); some active donors in the country (AGBU Armenian General Benevolent Union and Cafesjian Centre for the Arts) and foreign corporations (e.g. Viva-cell-mts and Orange). There are also private independent initiatives to bridge the gap between arts and culture such as cultural cafés (e.g. Artbridge), cultural centres (e.g. Mirzoyan library) and galleries that propose arts and culture programmes. Also, a big market and cultural hub is the Yerevan "Vernissage" market of art production, established at the end of 1980's. Currently, it is located in the very centre of the city, occupies about 3 hectares and represents the biggest concentration of craftsmen and artisans in Armenia. Local authorities have implemented several projects on renovation and improvement of the territory and facilities and today it is

also one of the most popular tourist attractions in Armenia.

Since the adoption of a national tourism strategy in 2008, the number of tourists as well as accommodation capacity is increasing yearly, except for 2020-2021 due to the pandemic and the II Karabakh War. Currently, the development of tourism is one of the accepted economic development priorities for 2021-2025. The new strategy includes organization and implementation of a big number of state funded cultural events such as performing and visual arts, crafts, gastronomy, local cultures festivals, city days. All these events positively affect the development of cultural and art industries. Special craft and artisan markets are usually organized during these days.

Nevertheless, no special policies on art and cultural industries have been developed yet^[1].

[1] The main source for this chapter is Farinha, Cristina, Developing cultural and creative industries in Armenia, report for EU Eastern Partnership programme, 2018

3.5.2. BOOKS AND PRESS

Printed production

The role of the RA Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports in book publishing is coordination and regulation of the field. In the implementation of state-funded programmes in the field of book publishing, the important role belongs to advisory councils attached to the Ministry. The councils help in taking professional opinion-based decisions and avoid subjective approaches. When forming the councils, each member's professional training, interdependence with both publishing houses and government structures is taken into account in order to create an impartial and transparent atmosphere.

The programmes of the RA Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports in the field of book publishing are aimed at solving the following problems: equal development of all aspects of the field of literature; preservation, development, dissemination and popularization of the literary-cultural heritage through literary products; reproduction of the creative potential of society and creating conditions for development; creating favorable conditions for international cooperation in the field of book publishing.

Within the framework of the library facilities improvement programme, the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of the Republic of Armenia acquires and distributes to the libraries newly published, valuable books, to meet the modern reading demand of libraries, and encourage the publication of professional, critical and fiction literature through the Creative and Research Activities Grant Programme, established in 2019 to support projects in cultural studies, fiction-writing, and literary criticism. The programme is somewhat filling the gap between the state policy in the independent cultural field, shifting the emphasis from the publishing-printing stage of book creation to the creative stage. The prospective goal of the project is to promote the creation of significant and lasting texts, thus contributing to the development of fiction and social sciences. The grant programme is going to be recurrent and will fund projects on an annual basis. Another programme "Armenian literature in translations" established in 2016 is aimed at supporting and promoting Armenian-language literature throughout the world. The programme provides support to foreign publishing houses that expressed a desire to publish Armenian classical or modern literature in a foreign language in their country. The foreign publishing houses can get acquainted with the procedure and schedule for submitting an application for funding at the website "armlit.am".

With the support of the RA Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports, Armenia hosts a separate booth at international book exhibitions and festivals (including: Minsk, Paris, Almaty, London, Tehran, Thessaloniki, Warsaw, New York, Moscow, Gothenburg, Frankfurt, Los Angeles, Bologna, Moscow, Leipzig, etc.) and organizes its own book festivals. Ensuring equal competition in the Armenian book publishing market and development of copyright and related rights laws and policies are the key issues for the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of the Republic of Armenia. To handle them properly, meetings with publishers, agents, and writers are regularly organized.

In the field of Print and electronic media, special support is provided to ethnic minorities by the programme financing the coverage of community culture, cultural events, and public life in the print and electronic media published in Armenia. Thanks to the project, ethnic minorities are able to preserve and develop their national language, folklore, culture, and traditions.

3.5.3. AUDIOVISUAL AND INTERACTIVE MEDIA

Article 20 of the Law on the Audiovisual media (adopted in 2020) defines the release/outlet data of the television and radio companies, as well as the mandatory procedure for making them public. Whilst applying for licences, television and radio companies submit full packages of data about themselves to the relevant body, which is the Television and Radio Commission. However, the products of television and radio companies are consumed in the online domain too via their official websites and social network pages. Moreover, there are television and radio companies, which in addition to their official websites and social network pages, also have online media. For example, the official website of the Public Television 1tv.am and the news portal 1Lurer.am, the official website of Shant television company shanttv.am and its news portal shantnews.am. The radio company Aurora in addition to its official website has a news portal auronews.am. The television company Free News broadcasts its products to the online audience not via a separate website but the online media outlet freenews.am, which had been operational much earlier and its various social network platforms. In fact, in Armenia too the former differences between television and radio companies and classic online media outlets in the online domain are gradually reducing[1].

There are 41 television and radio companies with state coverage and local/marz companies and they all have different levels of online presence. 78% of them (32 television and radio company) offer their online products via at least 1 official website and 2-3 social networks, whereas 22% (9 television and radio companies) offer their online products via social networks only. These companies either do not have official websites (yet) or their websites are not operational. The most used social network is Facebook (with 42 (95%) out of 44 websites having a presence here). Next in the order of reduction comes the YouTube (27 websites - 61%), Instagram (17 websites -39%), Twitter (13 websites-30%), Telegram (4 websites -9%), OK (3 websites -7%), VK (2 websites - 5%), and LinkedIn (2 websites - 5%). Not only audiovisual media with state coverage but also a number of local/marz media have wide online presence. However, this kind of online presence is not directly proportional to the level of transparency of the audio-visual media. According to the referred research (Indication and Transparency of Audio-visual media, by "Region" research centre), 20% of audio-visual media in Armenia are identified as transparent, 55% - partly transparent and 25% - non-transparent media [2].

Although Armenia has been through different periods of limited and free democracies, the audiovisual and interactive media have never been seriously under ideological pressure and their freedom of expression was generally observed. However, in the periods of limited democracy the access to public funds for some sphere

actors might be artificially limited.

[1] Identification and Transparency of Audiovisual Media in the Online Domain – 2021

[2] Identification and Transparency of Audiovisual Media in the Online Domain – 2021

3.5.4. MUSIC

As the free market does not cover all needs and demands in the sphere of music, the state is taking over some development and promotion tools to support national music art in Armenia. The main goals of state policy implementation in the field of music remain:

- creation of state-funded concert programmes,
- purchase of new works of modern composers,• internationalization and popularization of national musical art,
- providing favorable conditions for the competitiveness and creative activities of young composers and musicians,
- by supporting participation of Armenian musicians in international music contests and festivals,
- ensuring preservation, development, dissemination and popularization of music, new programmes, ideas, creative initiatives;
- strengthening of cooperation between creative groups, creative individuals and international cultural organizations operating in the Republic of Armenia.

The state entities operating in the field of music are: the National Philharmonic Orchestra of Armenia, State National Academic Choir of Armenia, Komitas National Quartet, National Centre of Chamber Music, National Centre of Folk Music, State Symphony Orchestra of Armenia, Centre of Armenian Spiritual Music, State Philharmonic of Armenia, Pop Jazz Orchestra of Armenia, State Song Theatre of Armenia.

The state also funds and controls the educational centres in the field of music such as music schools, the Yerevan State Music Pedagogical College after Arno Babajanyan, the Romanos Melikyan State Music College, the Gyumri Kara-Murza State Music College, the Gavar State Music College, and the Yerevan State Conservatory after Komitas. The Ministry's annual and medium-term budget programmes support the development of modern, classical, folk music, the participation of musicians in international competitions and festivals, the purchase of new works by modern composers, and institutional capacity development programmes for music organizations, including renovation, modern technologies and equipment.

Since 2019, some projects of institutional reorganization and optimization are being developed. For instance, in order to improve the activities of the National Centre of Folk Music, to increase its efficiency, to provide a decent rehearsal space and a concert hall, there is a draft project to merge the National Centre of Folk Music with the State Philharmonic of Armenia. Such projects may be hard to accept for some beneficiaries, so they require some time to discuss and to adapt.

3.5.5. DESIGN AND CREATIVE SERVICES

The sphere of design and creative services is still not included in the vision of the RA state policy. This area is mainly handled by private profit-making organizations, which turn it into cultural businesses. Most of these

organizations operate in Yerevan, and engage in the organization of cultural events (weddings, festivals, etc.) and provision of different types of cultural services (design, architectural services, advertising, etc.). Their activities are regulated by general legislation and, particularly, the tax and labor law of RA.

3.5.6. CULTURAL AND CREATIVE TOURISM

The RA Statistical Committee conducts tourism statistics according to the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) methodology and defines an international tourist as anyone who travels for rest, medical treatment, visiting relatives, business, religious or other purposes for not less than 24 hours and not more than 1 consecutive year. Thus, in 2020, according to the data of the Statistical Committee published on February 5 (before the pandemic), the number of tourists arriving in Armenia increased by about 1 million 300 thousand in the ten years between 2009 and 2019[1]. According to the data of the Ministry of the Economy, among the tourists arriving in Armenia, about 31 percent are Diaspora Armenians, 69 percent are foreigners[2]. Almost half of the tourists in Armenia are attracted by cultural tourism, 19 percent come to see the nature of Armenia, and 16 percent come for entertainment. Business, adventure and resort tourism are preferred by 13 percent of the total, and 3 percent come to Armenia for long-term tourism[3].

The country development plan for 2021-2025 envisions a number of activities to encourage and support tourism development, and among them, the organization of more gastro and other types of cultural festivals and cultural events to attract more tourists. Also, it is supposed that the state strategy on preservation of historical, cultural, and both tangible and intangible heritage would contribute to increasing tourist flows to Armenia. Creative industries are tightly associated with tourism, as tourists are the main consumers of the production of those industries. Therefore, the state or community funded cultural events or festivals pay special attention to involving representatives of these industries in the projects. In some places, markets of creative arts and souvenir production are persistently organized near the historical and religious monuments under the patronage of local authorities or local cultural/development organizations (e.g. the arts and crafts market in the village Gosh near the Goshavank monastery).

[1] mineconomy.am/media/9557/TourismStrategy_2020-2030.pdf

[2] mineconomy.am/media/9557/TourismStrategy_2020-2030.pdf

[3] /ibid./

4. Law and legislation

4.1. General legislation

4.1.1. CONSTITUTION

Under the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia (Articles 8.1, 11, 31, 40, 41):

- Historical and cultural monuments and other cultural values are under the care and protection of the state;
- within the framework of the principles and norms of international law, the Republic of Armenia contributes to fostering relations with the Armenian Diaspora, protecting Armenian historical and cultural values located in other countries, and promotes Armenian education and culture;
- the Republic of Armenia recognises the exclusive historical mission of the Apostolic Church as a national church in the spiritual life and development of the national identity of the people of Armenia;
- the state guarantees the existence and activity of an independent and public radio and television service offering a variety of information, cultural and entertainment programmes;
- intellectual property is protected by law;
- everyone has the right to freedom of literary, aesthetic, scientific and technical creation, to make use of scientific advancement and to participate in cultural life;
- everyone has the right to preserve his or her national and ethnic identity. Persons belonging to national minorities have the right to preservation and development of their traditions, religion, language and culture.

4.1.2. ALLOCATION OF PUBLIC FUNDS

The allocation of public funds is carried out in accordance with the annual State Budget Law. Funds are allocated to the Ministry of Culture in the form of mid-term programme expenditure and in the form of current year expenditure. The funds in the Ministry budget are distributed in accordance with the infra-legislative acts. Amendments to the Law are regulated by government resolutions and by orders of the Finance and Economy Minister. The Ministry of Culture announces annual tenders for the various cultural fields (e.g. theatre, cinema) and carries out fund allocation programmes. The purchase of capital outlays, devices and equipment for cultural facilities is carried out through tenders announced by the State Agency of Purchases, which is attached to the government. The Minister of Culture distributes funds in accordance with supremacy defined by the State Council. Deputy Ministers of Culture and heads of departments are members of the Council.

4.1.3. SOCIAL SECURITY FRAMEWORKS

As per February 2022, the official unemployment level in the Republic of Armenia is 14.80%, however there is no separate data concerning cultural workers. The social welfare standards in the Republic of Armenia may be applied to the cultural sphere as well, however it must be noted, that a significant number of representatives of the sphere (artisans, craftsmen, cultural industries, etc.) are in precarious a position and may not be eligible for some social security benefits.

There is no standardised system of state-funded health insurance in Armenia, but many cultural and education

institutions cover health insurance for their employees. Since 2022, the ballet and opera theatre performers are also eligible for this benefit.

All registered employees are eligible to get a employment pension after they reach the age of 63. However, some categories of education and cultural workers and theatre performers are eligible to get an employment pension after they have worked in the profession for 12 years. Armenian law also governs maternity and temporary disability benefits for both employees and the self-employed. The self-employed cannot receive this benefit if the activities were terminated; they are registered in the status of micro-enterprise, and if they received benefits under the law "On Tax Exemption of Activities in Border Settlements".

Social benefits such as pensions and allowances are usually rather small; in some cases they do not even cover the life minimum, so people have to keep working until they are able to.

4.1.4. TAX LAWS

Starting from 1 January 2022, income tax should be calculated at a 21% flat rate. There are no legal tax benefits in the Republic of Armenia relating to cultural patronage. The VAT for cultural services and goods is 20%. There is not yet any privilege to free cultural workers or facilities from income taxes or from any other taxes, if they are not registered as micro-entrepreneurs who pay smaller amounts of social payments (social security and military tax). Although there is no law fixed in Armenia, creative workers do not pay value added taxes on the sales of their art work. There are no special privileges defined by the Laws on Income and Profit to benefit cultural institutions or individuals. At the same time, there is a commission attached to the government which allows some benevolent programmes, once recognised, to be exempt from paying taxes. A number of programmes are carried out by donors in Armenia in the sphere of arts and culture (e.g. "Armenia" All-Armenian Foundation, Open Society Institute Assistance Foundation, Gafesjian Foundation, Izmirlian Foundation). Despite the fact that a number of cultural undertakings have been realised under private patronage, there are no tax laws to stimulate these kinds of activities by freeing donors from paying taxes or by applying a reduction system.

4.1.5. LABOUR LAWS

Institutions, including cultural ones, are guided by the Labour Code (2004). Labour relations between individual art workers and cultural organisations are regulated both by law and by the provisions of agreements signed between them, in the form of typical labour or service agreements. Regarding the regulation of payments, cultural workers do not differ from other workers. The Labour Code does not provide any separate provision for voluntary work and unintentionally considers it as a job too. Volunteers work in different fields, but without any legislative protection.

4.1.6. COPYRIGHT PROVISIONS

Implementation and preservation of copyright provisions are ongoing in the Republic of Armenia. The formation of the newly independent Armenia gave rise to new institutes in the field of intellectual property, particularly in the copyright sphere, along with the necessity for compliance with international legal acts. In the sphere of video-audio production, piracy is a major issue. The Law on Copyright and Related Rights and the Civil Code regulate the issues of intellectual property and copyright, including copyright relating to works of literature, science and the arts. The Law on Copyright and Related Rights was adopted on 15 January 2006. The main goal of the Law is to define copyright works and subjects, to regulate more productively legal interrelations, and to

ensure guarantees for the implementation of provisions in the Law. Particularly, the works' list in the cultural sphere was filled up and developed, including new directions connected with the use of information technologies (calligraphy, electronic cultural products and so on). Recently, there was a dispute with regard to the preservation of copyright and related rights for computer typefaces, involving the creators, publishers and designers, the organisations acting in the IT sector and representatives of scientific organisations, as well as the Armenian representative of Microsoft. More efficient mechanisms for the use of documents in the legislative field were proposed, as well as standardisation and authorisation issues. The Armenian Copyright Law is based on the European model, though it has specific local approaches. There are policies for "fair use" of copyright material, particularly for educational purposes, which is reflected in the Law.

4.1.7. DATA PROTECTION LAWS

Data protection in Armenia is regulated by the [Law on the Protection of Personal Data](#) ('the Personal Data Law'), accepted in 2015. The main regulators and policy-makers in the field are the Personal Data Protection Agency and the Ministry of Justice of RA. The Agency has released guidance on topics such as children's personal data, video surveillance, personal data related to labour relations, and the protection of personal data at public events.

4.1.8. LANGUAGE LAWS

Under the Constitution, Armenian is confirmed as the state language of the Republic of Armenia. Regulation of language use is carried out by the state Language Inspectorate of the Ministry of Education and Science. The language used in broadcasting radio and television programmes in Armenia depends on the status of the broadcaster (state or private) and the nature of the programme, although programme language is mainly Armenian. TV programmes in foreign languages, foreign language episodes of Armenian programmes, as well as the films of the Public TV Company are broadcasted in simultaneous Armenian translation. This does not include the TV programmes that are broadcasted for foreign countries and for national minorities. Since there are no state cinemas in Armenia, films are mainly shown in Russian, because the majority of the Armenian population speaks Russian and the films are distributed mainly through Russian companies, which avoid extra costs on dubbing. This practice is not in line with the requirements of the legislation on the state language. The exceptions are only the films shown during Yerevan international film fest "Golden Apricot" and within the frameworks of different cultural days, when films are presented with Armenian oral or written translation. There is a Russian Dramatic Theatre in Yerevan and its performances are in Russian. The performances during the "Hayfest" international annual festival of theatrical troupes are performed in the languages of participating countries. Books in foreign languages are published in Armenia under state patronage including books in the languages of national minorities.

4.1.9. OTHER AREAS OF GENERAL LEGISLATION

The Law on freedom of conscience and religious organisations was accepted on 14 June 1991. It declares freedom of religion and belief. All citizens of Armenia, according to the Law, are free to practice any religion, or none.

4.2. Legislation on culture

4.2.1. GENERAL LEGISLATION ON CULTURE

The key normative-legal Act regulating the cultural sphere is the Law on Fundamentals of Cultural Legislation (2002), which determines the tasks of the Republic of Armenia's cultural legislation, principles of the state cultural policy, goals, approaches to the cultures of national minorities, fundamental human and civil rights and freedoms in the cultural sphere, cultural wealth of the Republic of Armenia, relations between the state and the creative workers' unions, state activities in the cultural sphere, powers of the state and local self-government bodies, financing of culture and cultural activities, types of activities of cultural non-profit organisations, and the main directions of international cooperation in this sphere.

Analysis of the Law on Fundamentals of Cultural Legislation shows a necessity to adopt legislation to regulate the separate cultural sectors (protection of cultural heritage, cinematography, works of amateur art, museums, libraries, archives, publishing businesses, artistic education, folk culture, etc).

Some of the drafts regulating the cultural sphere are at the discussion stage in the National Assembly for several years. Work on drafting of some laws is under way at the Ministry of Culture. It is anticipated to develop and submit, for adoption to the National Assembly, the following legal acts: Draft Laws on Theatre and Theatrical Activity, on Museum Collection and Museums, on Library Activity, on Non-Material Cultural Heritage and new editions of old laws such as Documents and Fundamentals of Cultural Legislation. It is also anticipated to develop and present the draft Law on National Film.

The cultural sphere is also regulated by other laws and by-laws, including Laws on Preservation and Utilisation of Immovable Monuments of History and Culture and of the Historic Environment, Immovable Monuments of History and Culture Considered State Ownership of RA and Not Subject to Alienation, Archives Activity, as well as Regulations on the State Registration, Study, Protection, Mounting, Repair, Restoration, Utilisation of the fundamental rights and freedoms of artists are prescribed by the Law on the Fundamentals of Cultural Legislation (2002).

The fundamental human and civil rights and freedoms in the cultural sector are envisaged in Chapter 2 of the Law, by which every person has a right to participate in cultural life and carry out cultural and creative activity, participate in cultural values, receive appropriate education, as well as the right to export the results of their creative activity. The creators have a right to establish cultural organisations. The same Law determines that the state supports the activities of the creative workers' unions, giving them an opportunity to participate in cultural policy development and takes into consideration their proposals in the course of elaboration of programmes in the spheres of creative workers' employment, professional training, job guarantees and social security. According to Article 3 of the Law, the principle of freedom of cultural and creative activity is envisaged.

Table 2: International legal instruments implemented by Armenia in the cultural field

Title of the act	Year of adoption in Armenia
The 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the event of armed conflict	05.12.1993
Second Protocol to the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in in the event of armed conflicts, The Hague, March 26, 1999	18.08.2006

First Protocol of 1954 on the Protection of Cultural Property in the in the case of armed conflicts 05.12.1993
The 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide 23.06.1993
Geneva Convention of August 12, 1949 for the Protection of the Civilian Population in Time of War 21.10.1950
Geneva Conventions of August 12, 1949 for the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol 1) 07.12.1993
Geneva Conventions of August 12, 1949 for the Protection of Victims of Armed Conflicts of a Non-International Character, (Protocol 2) 07.12.1993

2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

1972 UNESCO Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage

The importance of cultural heritage for society Council of Europe Framework Convention 2005, Faro

Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict. The Hague, 14 May 1954

Second Protocol to the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict 1954, The Hague, 26 March 1999

Convention (IV) for the protection of civilians in time of war. Geneva, 12 August 1949

Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, Relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts (Protocol II). Geneva, 8 June 1977

Additional Protocol to the Geneva Conventions of August 12, 1949, concerning the protection of victims of international armed conflicts (Protocol I)

Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, 1948

Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, 1972, Paris, UNESCO

Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, 2003, UNESCO

Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Significance of Cultural Heritage for Society, 2005, Faro

Protocol for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict. The Hague, May 14, 1954

Second Protocol to the Hague Convention of 1954 for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict The Hague, 26 March 1999

Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict. The Hague, 14 May 1954

Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I), 8 June 1977

Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts (Protocol II), 8 June 1977

Convention on the Rights of the Child, 20 November 1989

Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, 25 May 2000

Protocol additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Adoption of an Additional Distinctive Emblem (Protocol III), 8 December 2005

Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, 9 December 1948

Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, 17 July 1998

Convention on the Non-Applicability of Statutory Limitations to War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity, 26 November 1968

Protection of cultural property military manual, UNESCO, 2016

Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, 2003

Convention concerning the protection of the world cultural and natural heritage, 1972, Paris

Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (Faro Convention, 2005

4.2.2. LEGISLATION ON CULTURE AND NATURAL HERITAGE

The Law on Preservation and Utilisation of Immovable Monuments of History and Culture and of the Historic Environment (adopted on the 11 November 1998) determines the concept of monuments of history and culture,

objects of preservation and utilisation of monuments, subjects, classification of monuments, powers of the state and local selfgovernment bodies in the sphere of preservation and utilisation of monuments and the procedure on the state registration of monuments. It also ensures preservation of monuments and the historic environment and supports the study of monuments and archaeological digs.

The Law determines the repair and restoration of monuments, ownership of monuments, utilisation of monuments, financing of monument preservation and utilisation, and responsibility in the sphere of monuments preservation and utilisation.

The Law on Immovable Monuments of History and Culture Considered State Ownership of RA and Not Subject to Alienation (2003) regulates the types of immovable monuments of history and culture considered to be in state ownership, as well as determines the forms of use of these monuments and the areas they occupy. On this basis, the Government Decree approved The List of Immovable Monuments Considered as State Ownership and Not Subject to Alienation.

The Regulations on the State Registration, Study, Protection, Mounting, Repair, Restoration, Utilisation of Immovable Monuments of History and Culture, and Transportation of Immovable Monuments of History and Culture regulate the cultural heritage sector. The Law on Archives Activity (2004) regulates legal relations concerning the stocking, registration, preservation, and use of the archives collection and other archival documents (despite the right of ownership), as well as relating to the archives sector. This sector is regulated also by the Government Decrees on Exemplary List of Archival Documents with Preservation Dates (2006) and the Procedure of Financing of Preservation of the Republic of Armenia Archives Collection (2005).

The Law on Export and Import of Cultural Values regulates the processes of export and import of cultural items, determining precisely the conditions and order of exporting cultural items that are considered personal and state property. This field is regulated by the Government Decrees on Procedure of Registration on a Voluntary Basis of Non-State Cultural Values Included in the Protective List of Cultural Values and Criteria Setting (2005), Approval of Expertise Licensing Procedure of Movable Cultural Values and the License Type (2005), and Establishment of the List of Especially Valuable Cultural Values Considered to be the Cultural Heritage of the Republic of Armenia (2005).

The Law on Intangible Cultural Heritage regulates legal issues related to the preservation, protection and development of intangible cultural values which includes their identification, documentation, study, application, rehabilitation, and dissemination processes, as well as copyright, international cooperation and communication issues and procedures. The Law also provides a definition of the intangible cultural heritage and counts spheres circumscribed in this notion. The Law was accepted in 2009.

4.2.3. LEGISLATION ON PERFORMANCE AND CELEBRATION

There is no corresponding law yet.

4.2.4. LEGISLATION ON VISUAL ARTS AND CRAFTS

There is no corresponding law yet.

4.2.5. LEGISLATION ON BOOKS AND PRESS

The Law on Mandatory Copying of Documents, adopted on the 04 October 2005, regulates the legal and financial-economic relations concerning the delivery, permanent preservation, registration of editions, electronic publications and unpublished material of all types, preparation of a bibliography and public use of the national heritage.

According to some Decrees adopted by the government in 1997, central libraries of the library system were reorganised as regional libraries, and other libraries under community ownership.

The coordinating link of works between the state and book-publishing sphere is the Agency on Publishing of the Ministry of Culture, which is responsible for the organisation and assistance to the book-publishing sphere, as well as for providing state assistance to the non-state press and regional TV companies. The Agency works out plans and programmes for sector development, renders assistance to the activities organised by NGOs, promotes the presentation of Armenian books at the international exhibitions, fairs, etc.

The priorities in the literature sector to receive state assistance are determined by the government as advised by the authorised body on cultural issues (the Ministry of Culture). The Ministry of Culture extends financing by evaluating and choosing application proposals with a group of experts.

On 1 November 2007, the government adopted Decree N1285 on Approval of the Procedure of Free Distribution and Realisation of Literature Published by the State Order. The Ministry of Culture carries out free distribution and realisation of the literature published by the state order through the "Book" fund, concluding a commission agreement with it. The Ministry determines which organisations receive free literature from the "Book" fund.

On 21 March 2012 the government adopted the Law on Libraries and Library Science, regulating issues and procedures of library management, preservation, completion and use of library collections.

4.2.6. LEGISLATION ON AUDIOVISUAL AND INTERACTIVE MEDIA

The law on Audio-visual media was accepted in 2020. It aims:

- to ensure everyone's right to receive reliable information;
- to guarantee the right to freedom of expression of opinion;
- to guarantee editorial independence of persons rendering audiovisual media services;
- to guarantee independence of the body regulating the audio-visual media sector;
- to promote the development of a variety of audiovisual transfers.

As a result of implementation of the policy in the audio-visual media sector, it is expected to improve the quality of audio-visual products of public broadcasters, establish a favourable and prospective legal framework, create an equal competitive environment in the media sector, establish high-quality journalism, raise the level of media literacy, exclude hate speech, ensure effective media management, and ensure transparency of the ownership rights in the media sector.^[1]

[1] UNESCO, regulation of the audio-visual sector Armenia report 2020:

<https://en.unesco.org/creativity/policy-monitoring-platform/regulation-audio-visual-media>

4.2.7. LEGISLATION ON DESIGN AND CREATIVE SERVICES

Legal acts relating to these art forms have not been adopted yet.

5. Arts and cultural education

5.1. Policy and institutional overview

The main goals of state policy in the field of cultural education are:

- Regulation of the legislative field of artistic education
- Identifying the creative potential of gifted children and ensuring the full implementation of that potential
- Ensuring the normal operation of artistic educational institutions by replenishing the material and technical base and musical instruments, implementing educational works, developing and publishing new educational programmes and manuals.
- Ensuring access to learning within extracurricular art education and aesthetic education
- Implementation of training and requalification of specialists in the field of culture by studying international experience and introducing new professions in accordance with current requirements in the field of culture.
- Promoting the activities of young creators by implementing debut projects
- Inclusion of children with disabilities, and those who are socially insecure, or without parental care in cultural education.

The allocations received from the RA state budget are directed to the following programmes:

- "General education programme" ("Elementary specialized general education", "Basic specialized general education", "Secondary specialized general education", "Scholarship for children of specialized general educational institutions at the level of secondary general education", "Reimbursement of textbook fees for children of socially disadvantaged and border families" measures), which are carried out by Yerevan P. Secondary Music Vocational School named after Tchaikovsky.
- "Preliminary (vocational) and secondary professional education" programme ("Provision of student allowances for secondary vocational education" and the "Scholarship for students receiving secondary vocational education" events) is implemented by Yerevan State College of Dance.
- "Extracurricular education" programme ("Extracurricular education" event) is implemented by the "Children's special creative centre" state organization.

A number of targeted programmes are being implemented with state support:

- The programme "Development and publication of educational literature for music and art schools". Within the period of 2008-2019 about 310 published manuals were distributed free of charge to the educational institutions of the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Artsakh.
- The programme "Purchase of musical instruments for music and art schools" is aimed at the creation and continuous replenishment of a permanent collection of musical instruments. Within 2013-2019, 591 musical instruments purchased with the allocations of the programme were provided to gifted young musicians studying in music and art schools of RA provinces, and students of newly formed professional classes.
- The "Teaching of national, string and brass instruments in music and art schools" programme provides tuition reimbursement for 2,361 students of 146 music and art schools of the country every year.

- The funds provided by the programme "Educational works in music and art schools" are directed to the organization of educational and practical support of students and teachers in 207 music, art, fine arts and dance schools operating in the country through the leading specialists of the field.
- "Support to the development and improvement of professional abilities of gifted young musicians-performers" programme aims to identify and support talented musicians-performers aged 11-20 in the fields of "Piano", "Violin" and "Cello". The programme includes a complex series of activities, the implementation of which contributes to ensuring the competitiveness of the Armenian performing arts school in the international arena and forming the foundations of a normal generational change in the field of classical performing arts.

Many international and republican youth competitions, festivals, joint concerts, exhibitions and other events are held in Yerevan and the regions of the Republic of Armenia, including:

- "New Names" international festival of young musicians-performers. The goals are: identifying talent, supporting "new" names and musicians-performers, creating favorable conditions for young musicians with the opportunity to demonstrate their best professional qualities and express their musical performance abilities.
- Republican competition of young composers after Edward Mirzoyan. The goal is to provide an opportunity for young composers to publicly present their works.
- "We and our province" regional culture days in Yerevan for children and youth.

The programme is aimed at revitalization, promotion and development of cultural life in the provincial cities and cultural exchange between provincial cities and the capital.

- "Sister-schools" programme of cooperation between music and art schools of Yerevan and RA provinces. It is aimed at the promotion of the process of cooperation, acquisition of practical skills and exchange of experience between students and teachers of music and art schools in Yerevan and RA provinces. The project will also contribute to the balanced development of culture, ensuring access and affordability of artistic education. Twenty music and art schools from Yerevan and the provinces with 500 participants are beneficiaries of this programme.
- "REALBOARDS" educational programme for teenagers, aimed at giving the children of the regions of Armenia the chance to get theoretical and practical knowledge about the main professions of film production: screenwriter, director, cameraman and all technical and other creative professions.

Different educational programmes are also implemented in the fields of theatre, dance and fine arts.

Inclusive creative events and targeted educational projects are implemented in the field, aimed at the full inclusion of vulnerable groups in cultural life, ensuring the conditions for their further creative development and advancement, creating opportunities for self-expression, as well as creating an atmosphere of tolerance in society.

With the support of the Ministry and after the selection of the professional committee, talented young performers participate in international youth competitions, festivals and master classes held abroad. Master classes are also held in Armenia by leading specialists and performers, invited from abroad. Since 2019, grant programmes in the field of cultural education have been implemented through widely announced competitions.

In general, these programmes prove to be effective, however, some systemic shortcomings are still there and not in every school or educational institution is their implementation being done correctly and effectively.

5.2. Arts in schools

Art, predominantly drawing and applied arts, is being taught at secondary school level from first to seventh grades. Lessons in theory, history of music and basic singing are scarce. No playing musical instruments are taught in public secondary schools. Instead, other educational institutions such as houses of cultures and art schools offer a wide range of art specialties and musical skills. Most of them have charges, but the fees are not very high and are generally available to the lower middle-class families.

According to the defined culture development vision of the government, a number of programmes promoting the connection between education, culture and cultural education are being persistently implemented in the sector since 2019:

- The "Subscription System" programme, the goal of which is to increase the involvement of students in attending cultural events. The programme gives free opportunity to visit cultural institutions for school-aged children.
- "Your art at school" programme, the purpose of which is to fill the gap in "cultural education", to increase interest in reading, classical music and fine arts, to promote the development of critical, analytical and creative thinking in educational institutions in the fields of music, fine arts, literature, to facilitate young people to meet modern artists, to raise the aesthetic taste and civic consciousness of schoolchildren.

On the initiative of the National Academic Theatre named after Gabriel Sundukyan, since 2018-2019, the National Academic Theatre named after Gabriel Sundukyan has been implementing the "Class + Classical" theatre educational programme.

5.3. Higher arts and cultural education

There are a lot of opportunities to receive higher arts education in Armenia in different specialties of art and design. The following institutions provide degrees in the arts:

1. State Art University
2. State University of theatre and cinematography
3. State Conservatory
4. Yerevan St. Terlemezyan State College of Fine Arts
5. Gyumri State Music College named after Kara-Murza
6. Yerevan R. Melikyan State Music College
7. Yerevan State University of Architecture
8. State Pedagogical University

Also, art studies are taught in the Yerevan State University as an academic and research discipline. All these higher education institutions have been reformed in correspondence with the Bologna process (since 2010).

5.4. Out-of-school arts and cultural education

Out-of school arts and cultural education is provided by different private, religious or community cultural organizations and for profit entities, many of which have inherited the infrastructures of Soviet houses of culture or reproduce them. However, most of them are concentrated in big cities and villages. Many regional towns and villages are deprived of such possibilities because of dilapidated or eliminated infrastructures.

Currently there are a number of community infrastructural development projects, subsidized by the government that are focused on renovation of Houses of Cultures and turning them into multifunctional cultural centres, able to provide out-of-school cultural education to children and adults.

Also, the cultural project of revitalization of Community Cultural Centres is implemented by the “My Step” foundation in order to decentralize culture and overcome the professional gap between the capital and regions. The project envisaged the components of renovation, training and capacity building for 9 regional cultural centres. The programme was due to finish^[1].

[1] <https://old.mystep.foundation/en/news/3053/>

5.5. Vocational and professional training

The number of RA secondary professional and vocational education institutions has increased compared to the previous decades. Educational institutions of culture and art are mainly concentrated in Yerevan, with a number of fine art schools exists in marzes.

Cultural and vocational education institutions include:

- Yerevan State Humanitarian-Technical College
- Yerevan State Humanitarian College
- Yerevan R. Melikyan State Music College
- Yerevan A. State Music and Pedagogical College named after Babajanyan
- Yerevan St. Terlemezyan State College of Fine Arts
- State Choreography college
- Gyumri State Music College named after Kara-Murza
- M. of Vanadzor Tavrizyan State College of Arts
- Gavar State Music College
- Dilijan State College of Arts

Students graduating from these colleges are specialized in practicing arts without academic degrees. They can continue their education in higher art education or other institutions (see chapter 5.3), or start their careers as practicing art professionals.

6. Cultural participation and consumption

6.1. Policies and programmes

Some policies and programmes have been described in previous chapters 5.1 and 5.2.

6.2. Trends and figures in cultural participation

Table 3: People who participated in or attended a certain cultural activity during the last 12 months in [Armenia] (in % of the population, over 3 available years)

	2018	2019	2020
Activities heavily subsidised by the state			
Theatre	564.1	365.5	196.3
Opera performances	N/A	N/A	N/A
Zarzuela	N/A	N/A	N/A
Dance	N/A	N/A	N/A
Concerts of classic music	749	706	104
Libraries	455.7	456.7	303.2
Museums	2921.6	2366.1	704.2
Monuments	N/A	N/A	N/A
Cultural centres	N/A	N/A	N/A
Activities without large public subsidies			
Cinema	N/A	N/A	N/A
To read books not related to the profession or studies	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>In paper format (Usually use)</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>In digital format (Usually use)</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>Directly on the Internet (Usually use)</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A
To listen to music (Usually listen)	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>On a computer or directly on the Internet</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A
To read periodic publications (Usually read)	668	679	457
<i>Directly on the Internet</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A
To watch videos (Usually watch)	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>Directly on the Internet</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A
To watch television (Usually watch)	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>Directly on the Internet</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A
To listen to the radio (Usually watch)	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>Directly on the Internet</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A
To play videogames (Usually play)	N/A	N/A	N/A
To use computer for entertainment or leisure (Usually use)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Internet for entertainment or leisure (Usually use)	N/A	N/A	N/A

Source(s): Statistics 2021.pdf, www.armstat.am,

https://statbank.armstat.am/pxweb/hy/ArmStatBank/ArmStatBank__2%20Population%20and%20social%20processes__21%20Culture__214%20Concert%20activities/ps-cl-nco03.px/?rxid=9ba7b0d1-2ff8-40fa-a309-fae01ea885bb

6.3. Trends and figures in household expenditure

There is no information available on this subject.

6.4. Culture and civil society

The Armenian legislation guarantees all main rights and freedoms to the Civil society in Armenia. One of those rights and freedoms is freedom of expression, which is one of the basic rights for culture.

According to the Law on Mass Media, media practitioners and journalists act freely on the basis of principles of equality, lawfulness, freedom of expression and pluralism. Censorship, coercion, hindrance to professional activities, and discrimination are prohibited. The law restricts the dissemination of information that is considered secret information, or information advocating criminally punishable acts, as well as information violating the right to privacy of one's personal or family life.

However, in 2020, some restrictions were introduced for media publications due to the state of emergency announced because of the Covid-19 pandemic and the war. According to the decision on martial law, publication, and dissemination of information on military operations could only be done through quoting the official government information without editing it.

Furthermore, restrictions on freedom of expression were extended to prohibit statements criticizing or refuting the actions of the government, LSGBs, or officials done in the framework of the martial law and ensuring state security, as well as questioning the effectiveness of those actions or depreciating them in any way. These restrictions were limited in duration and justified by state security. Thus, in 2021 a law criminalizing insults and defamation was accepted, but in 2022 it was cancelled because of the vast criticism from civil society organizations, because obviously, these restrictions lacked specificity so that disproportional interference with the human rights and the work of journalists could take place[1].

After the Velvet Revolution in 2018 representatives of civil society organizations were also involved in the new team of the Government and therefore the space between the Government and the society was decreasing. In 2018 there was a significant increase of CSOs reputation as well as in the trust towards them. But within the last years the reputation rate towards CSOs has decreased and the distrust increased because of the defeat in the Karabakh war and an emerged discourse that the war was lost due to civic and diplomatic values advocated by CSOs[2].

However, the Civil Society organizations in Armenia are not going to reject their intentions to promote democratic and intellectual values through projects, initiatives, cultural and intellectual events and collaboration with international organizations. Thus, some initiatives are implemented in collaboration with Freedom House under the project entitled "Advancing Democratic Culture in Armenia", which is supposed to create space for dialogue among civil society, the government, policymakers, journalists, and the public through research and analysis, support for grassroots initiatives, media literacy activities, advocacy, and convenings. It is partnering with such organizations as the [Union of Informed Citizens](#), [Boon Foundation](#), [Civilitas Foundation](#), the [Civil Youth Centre](#) and [Goris Press Club](#)[3].

[1] CSO metre: a compass to conducive environment and CSO empowerment Armenia 2021 country report, <https://csometer.info/updates/armenia-2021-cso-meter-country-report-presented>

[2] Aghasi Tadevosyan, The Role of Civil Society Organizations: Problems and Challenges, <https://www.crrc.am/publications/the-role-of-civil-society-organizations-problems-and-challenges/>

[3] <https://freedomhouse.org/programs/regional-programs/europe-programs/democratic-culture-armenia>

7. Financing and support

7.1. Public funding

7.1.1. INDICATORS

The cultural sector in Armenia is mainly financed from the state budget. This funding approach provides cultural institutions with relative stability and development. It corresponds to the "state as architect" model of cultural policy[1]. State funding is allocated to various branches of culture and education in accordance with the priority plan developed by the Ministry and approved by the Government. Thus, in 2021, the following priorities have been defined: a. support for the cinematography industry; cultural heritage; performing and creative arts; d. development of children's artistic abilities; e. organization of cultural life in marzes; f. programme of modernization and preservation of state archives. All these priority areas would gradually receive increased funding during 2021-2023. The recent circumstances, such as the war (2020) and the pandemic (2020-2021) definitely affected the previous funding programmes and resulted in some relocations of the budget. For instance, in 2021, more money (2982.5 millions against of 2951.7 in 2020) was allocated to cultural heritage issues, which may be a direct consequence of the Armenian-Azerbaijani war endangering the Armenian cultural heritage.

In the last few years, certain changes in the financial policy planning and implementation can be observed, aimed at increasing non-state sources of cultural funding. More government programmes tend to be based on partnerships or public and private sectors. As a good example of such cooperation, the "Ararat" brandy factory and the "Beeline" mobile communication company, which sponsors various cultural events (concerts, exhibitions, festivals) can be mentioned. More local and international organizations and foundations openly express their interest in providing grants to cultural institutions and programmes. The private sector also tends to invest in the cultural sector, especially in relation to tourism development initiatives (eg sponsoring the arts, wine festivals, etc.), which are becoming regular. New funding mechanisms such as crowdfunding are also considered possible, like, for example, the cultural enterprise "301 publishing house" created by crowdfunding mechanisms.

Unfortunately, there seem to be no recent surveys on trends in private funding of culture in Armenia, perhaps due to the turbulent political situation and constant structural changes over the past three years.

[1] Chartrand H., McCaughey C., *Who's to Pay? for the Arts: The International Search for Models of Support*, 1989,

7.1.2. EXPENDITURE ON GOVERNMENT LEVEL

Table 4. Public cultural expenditure by level of government, [2021]

Level of government	Total expenditure in national currency AMD	Total expenditure in EUR*	% share of total
State (central, federal)	30.826.064	78.437	1.55
Regional (provincial, Länder, etc.)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Local (municipal, incl. counties)	N/A	N/A	N/A

TOTAL 30.826.064 78.437 100%

Note: * At the date of expenditure

1 EUR=393.72 AMD (20.10.2022)

Source: https://www.e-gov.am/interactive-budget/2021/?fbclid=IwAR0EmAaYCW0ovQg8K_Mkl7eCFLAUiiYc5epcs8z6Yh0WE95IWahta7U6nTg#{%22groupIndex%22:%228%22,%22subGroupIndex%22:1,%22classIndex%22:null,%22programIndex%22:null,%22minIndex%22:null

7.1.3. EXPENDITURE PER SECTOR

Table 5: Direct state cultural expenditure and transfers (central level)*: by sector, [2021], in 1000 of national currency

Field/Domain/Sub-domain	TOTAL in 1000	in %
I. Cultural Heritage	2,982,531.4	9.67
<i>Historical Monuments</i>	70,063.3	0.2
<i>Museums</i>	2,683,860.8	8.7
<i>Archives</i>	590,176.5	1.9
<i>Libraries</i>	1,522,677.5	4.9
<i>Intangible Heritage / Folk Culture</i>	38,400.0	0.12
II. Visual Arts	8,738,054.5	28.34
<i>Fine Arts / Plastic Arts</i>	N/A	
<i>Photography</i>	N/A	
<i>Architecture***</i>	N/A	
<i>Design / Applied Arts</i>	N/A	
III. Performing Arts	8,738,054.5	28.34
<i>Music</i>	2,380,252.7	7.7
<i>Theatre, Music Theatre, Dance</i>	2,945,894.1	9.5
<i>Multidisciplinary</i>	954,192.4	3.1
IV. Books and Press	1,691,086.2	5.48
<i>Books</i>	430,334.4	1.3
<i>Press</i>	760,176.0	2.4
V. Audiovisual and Multimedia		
<i>Cinema</i>	714,060.2	2.3
<i>Television</i>	N/A	
<i>Sound recordings</i>	N/A	
<i>Radio</i>	N/A	
<i>Multimedia</i>	N/A	
VI. Interdisciplinary		
<i>Socio-culture</i>	24,894.6	0.8

<i>Cultural Relations Abroad</i>	1,085,046.6	3.5
<i>Administration****</i>	N/A	
<i>Cultural Education****</i>	4,527.068	14.6
VII. Not covered by domain I-VI		
TOTAL	30.826.064	100

Source(s): <https://escs.am/am/category/budget>

* Where available, please provide separate tables – 7.1, 7.2, etc. – for other levels of government

** Definition: "Direct expenditure" is spent within the administration and its own cultural institutions (for personnel, goods and services, capital investments in their own premises), whereas "transfers" are being allocated to either "other levels of government", e.g. on the local level, or to independent cultural institutions and organisations, to film companies, publishing houses, individual artists; etc.

*** This category does NOT include public investments into constructions or for the renovation of buildings. It covers e.g. the promotion of architecture, educational activities, etc.

**** When not allocable by domain.

NOTE The diverse field of digital arts could be mentioned either in their appropriate contexts (e.g. design or multimedia) or, where separate budgetary categories exist, specified under VII.

7.2. Support programmes

7.2.1. STRATEGIES, PROGRAMMES AND OTHER FORMS OF SUPPORT

The RA Government's cultural policy envisages several programmes for supporting culture, creators and cultural initiatives, which are being implemented:

Cinematography programme

The functions of creating film products, presenting domestic film production in Armenia and the international arena, and digitizing the Armenian film heritage are carried out by 2 state non-profit organizations implementing the cultural policy and public organizations providing cultural services that won as a result of the competition for grant-funded cultural programmes.

Cultural heritage programme

The programme includes registration, reservation, scientific study, replenishment, restoration, and popularization of museum exhibitions and movable cultural heritage. The programme is carried out in 36 museums, the National Archive of Armenia, the Department of History and Cultural Monuments of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of the Republic of Armenia, 2 state non-profit organizations, and one NGO through an NGO.

Books and writing programme

The programme aims at equal development of all parts of the literary and publishing field: writing and producing literary products, publishing, preservation, development, dissemination and popularization of the literary-cultural heritage implemented by 12 organizations that provide cultural services that have won the grants competition for state funding.

Arts programme

The programme aims at the creation of a competitive field for the creation of art products and provision of art services in the field, encouragement of debut creative programmes, experimental and innovative forms of art, and evaluation of individual creators and phenomena. The programme is implemented by 37 theatres as well as by public organizations and individuals awarded grants as a result of the competition of grant-funded cultural programmes.

Cultural and aesthetic education programme

This project is aimed at identifying and developing children's spiritual and aesthetic abilities, ensuring the accessibility of aesthetic education, increasing the quality of cultural services, and implementing aesthetic education programmes. It is implemented by public organizations providing cultural services that won the competition of state, community and grant-funded cultural programmes.

Regional cultural development programme

The programme is aimed at ensuring the continuity of the political decentralization of culture, invigorating cultural life in the regions, developing interregional ties, and ensuring the implementation of cultural activities. It is implemented by a public organization providing cultural services that won as a result of the competition for grant-making cultural programmes.

National Archives Programme

The project aims at ensuring the preservation of archival documents, replenishment, use and creation of an automatic information-search system and is implemented by the National Archive of Armenia.

7.2.2. ARTIST'S FUNDS

There are no specific funds for supporting creators in any sphere of art.

7.2.3. GRANTS, AWARDS, SCHOLARSHIPS

Grants are one of the important tools of cultural policy (D. Adams, A. Goldbard)[1], which are characteristic mainly of liberal models, such as liberal (M. Dragièeviaè-Sešiaè)[2], market (A. Wiesand)[3], or the state as an encouraging model. We can state that after the Velvet Revolution, grants and scholarships became one of the important tools. If in the past the culture support policy used state-financed orders as a main tool of development of culture, then after 2018, cultural programmes and projects in state policy began to be financed and developed through grants.

Since 2018, many grants have been announced for libraries, museums, visual culture, and cultural heritage

preservation. Cultural grant programmes are aimed at introducing a transparent and competitive system of distribution of state funds, proportional development of various fields of art, construction of a free and participatory cultural field, development of modern arts and creative industries, preservation and effective management of historical and cultural heritage, ensuring the presentation of Armenian culture and modern art on various platforms.

Let's look at some examples. In 2021 cultural grants were awarded in the following categories:

1. "Creative educational (cultural education)" nomination
2. "Support to the development and improvement of professional abilities of gifted young musicians" nomination
3. "Teaching methodical works in music and art schools" nomination
4. "Programmes and projects for spreading the culture of national minorities" nomination
5. Creative art programmes and projects (photography, decorative-applied art, design)
6. "Theatrical creative programmes and projects" nomination
7. "Cultural TV programmes" nomination
8. "Creative programmes and projects of film art" (except for film production projects) nomination
9. "Intangible cultural heritage protection programmes" nomination
10. "Projects and events aimed at the popularization of literature" nomination
11. "Museum Events and Exhibitions" nomination
12. Musical creative programmes and projects" nomination
13. "Creative dance programmes and projects" nomination
14. "Inclusive programmes and projects of the field of contemporary art".

The titles of the grants make clear that cultural education, the development of art branches, and the preservation of heritage occupy a dominant place among the priorities of the state policy.

[1] Adams D., Arlene G., The Instrumentalities of Cultural Policy // <http://www.wgcd.org/policy/concepts.html>:

[2] Драгичевич-Шешич М., Культурная политика в переходном обществе: фрагменты политологического и культурологического анализа, Панорама культурной жизни стран СНГ и Балтии. М., изд. РГБ, 1999, с. 26-31

[3] Востряков Л., Государственная культурная политика: от патерналистской к партнерской модели?, "Управленческое консультирование", 2011.

7.2.4. SUPPORT TO PROFESSIONAL ARTISTS' ASSOCIATIONS OR UNIONS

Support to professional artists is made through state grants or scholarship initiatives (see Chapter 7.2.3) and private funding (see Chapter 7.3). Besides, some private initiatives can be mentioned such as the Armenia Art Foundation (AA Foundation) is an independent non-profit organization aiming to support the development of contemporary art in Armenia, established in 2016 by David Nazaryan and Rafael Nazaryan.

The mission of the Foundation is to support professionals working in Armenia in the field of contemporary art, and to unlock their creative potential both in the country and abroad.[1]

7.3. Private funding

There are a lot of private funding initiatives of different calibers in the country, both of an individual and collective nature. Local and Diaspora benefactors may fund different education and cultural events, initiatives, projects such as equipping schools and kindergartens, supporting cultural events, helping creative individuals, etc. Usually, making cultural or educational donations is prestigious among affluent migrants and local businessmen. Besides, there are private institutionalized funds supporting educational and cultural initiatives. It is worth mentioning several Armenian or Armenia-oriented Funds that purposely support education and culture in Armenia. Examples are:

- *Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation*

The programme of cultural support for Armenia for 2019-2023 includes contemporary creation in the fields of Literature, Performing Arts, and Cinema and the ongoing education of professionals and the public in Arts and Culture. The foundation also supports individual and collective research initiatives and book translation and publishing projects.

- *Tufenkian Foundation*[1]

The foundation supports development projects in different spheres aimed at combating poverty, community empowerment, and education. Currently there are several projects addressing culture and education such as “Martuni schools”, “Civil society development”, “Family and Community NGOs” which are under implementation.

- *AGBU (Armenian General Benevolent Union)*[2]

The Union has culture support initiatives. As it states: “Armenian culture thrives across the world as a key marker of our unique national identity. Music and the arts, literature and architecture, as well as ancient, folk and religious traditions help drive the AGBU mission to uplift Armenian lives through creative expression.” Over the decades, AGBU has launched an array of cultural initiatives that connect Armenians in every generation across the world. It prioritizes the following directions: promoting Armenian heritage; sustaining cultural gems (masterpieces of Armenian architecture, art, literature, writing culture, etc.); developing talents; and supporting cultural connections. In the sphere of education, AGBU gives priority to innovative learning platforms and programmes, classroom experience; and providing accessible resources. AGBU’s prominent projects such as TUMO, Children Centres, interschool Chess tournaments, [Atlas platform](#), [ebooks and apps](#), [Armenian Virtual College](#) courses, [Artsakh heritage pages](#) and [WebTalks](#) are notable. AGBU offers a vast array of [scholarship opportunities](#) to students internationally. It also funds research grants for individuals and institutions in various fields of Armenian studies. In Armenia, AGBU provides substantial support to the country’s universities, namely the [American University of Armenia \(AUA\)](#), [Yerevan State University \(YSU\)](#), and the [French University in Armenia \(UFAR\)](#).

- *The Jinishian Foundation*[3]

According to its mission statement, the Jinishian Memorial Foundation enables Armenians in need to move from

poverty and despair to self-sufficiency and hope – through relief, development and spiritual uplift. It supports different projects in education, community development, culture and economics. Among its projects the educational initiatives aimed at activation of student councils, cultural projects like “Mshakutamet” (“Culture-oriented”), or summer camps for children from Evangelist communities may be mentioned. With the frameworks of the “Mshakutamet” project, e.g. About 100 volunteer professionals provide cultural education opportunities for around 420 children and adolescents from targeted villages by introduction and teaching of 9 different musical instruments, vocal and choir lessons, art and IT classes.

- Smithsonian Institution “My Armenia” Programme[4]

“My Armenia” strengthens cultural heritage sustainability through community-based tourism development. This collaborative project between the people of Armenia, the Smithsonian, and USAID started in 2016 with work concentrated in five focus regions. Intensive research provided by the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography in Yerevan guides the selection and curation of all My Armenia experiences.

The My Armenia Programme is funded by USAID and implemented by the Smithsonian Institution.

[1] <https://www.tufenkian.org>

[2] <https://agbu.org/>

[3] <https://www.jinishian.org/>

[4] <https://myarmenia.si.edu>

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[More information »](#)

In 2007, the Armenian profile was first prepared by Artsvi Bakhchinyan, in co-operation with Nerses Ter-Vardanyan. In 2008, the profile was updated by Aram Mkrtychyan. Since 2010, the profile was updated by Yulia Antonyan, with the assistance of Haykuhi Muradyan.

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