



## Country Profile

### March 2025

### The Republic of Azerbaijan

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## 1 Cultural policy system

### 1.1 *Objectives, main features and background*

The national cultural policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan is developed based on universal values and the national history of statehood and culture. It aligns with principles of cultural policy, such as promoting identity and diversity, supporting creativity, engaging in cultural life, and respecting artistic rights and ethics. Due to general development and the establishment of an independent state policy, the [\*Concept of Culture of the Republic of Azerbaijan\*](#), approved by Order of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan No.273, dated 14 February 2014, has created a systematic approach to understanding the main cultural policy objectives at the highest executive level in the field of culture. Thus, the national cultural policy implemented in recent years involves adjusting the mechanisms of cultural policy provision to meet the actual requirements of cultural activity, which primarily implies the improvement and further development of culture:

- Legislation (national, international, copyright);
- Financing (public budget, paid cultural services, fundraising);
- Administration (public institutions, creative unions, private enterprises);
- Information (research, databases, mass media);
- Human resources (education and training, social security, encouragement);
- Infrastructure (buildings, equipment, supply);
- International cooperation (multilateral, bilateral, diaspora).

In this regard, it is worth noting that the national cultural policy is based on a model of harmonious development rooted in historical continuity. This perspective is essential for establishing a comprehensive approach to practical integrating artefacts from various eras of the history of Azerbaijani culture, in which traditional folk creativity coexists with contemporary artistic innovations, the rock paintings of Gobustan and Nakhchivan, which date back tens of thousands of years, coexist with the first opera and ballet in the East, classical mugham and the art of ashig alongside symphonic mugham and jazz mugham, as well as cinema that emerged in Azerbaijan in the 19th century, along with various creative cultural technologies. These and many other cultural expressions are alive and evolving, requiring increased attention and responsibility toward future generations.

In light of this, a temporal "yesterday-today-tomorrow" approach has been incorporated into the current national cultural policy. Consequently, the various manifestations of culture are typically categorised as follows:

- cultural heritage, which includes tangible immovable, movable, and intangible heritage;
- professional arts, comprising music, theatre, and fine arts; and
- creative cultural industries, covering cinematography, publishing, and cross-sectoral industries.

The temporal classification provides opportunities for targeted and qualified development of state programs, setting specific tasks and monitoring key performance indicators.

Along with the above, the national cultural policy is not content with what has been achieved: it is constantly developing, comprehending, and rethinking itself in connection with rapidly changing global trends and new prospects for the country's development, especially after the restoration of the internationally recognised territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan. This is evidenced by the Public Forums organised in 2023 as part of the events dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the National Leader of Azerbaijan, Heydar Aliyev, and addressing various spheres of culture, such as the Theatre Forum (April 11-12, 2023), the Cinema Forum (April 20-21, 2023), the Azerbaijani Language and Literature Forum (September 2-4, 2023), the Music Forum (October 29-31, 2023), the Culture and Creative Industries Forum (November 28-30, 2023) and the Cultural Heritage Forum (December 18-20, 2023), with impressive statistics on professional engagement: over 5,000 participants, including eminent persons from corresponding spheres, over 150 reports on relevant topics across within more than 30 panel discussions, 250+ proposals, and so on.

The *draft "Azerbaijani Culture - 2040" Concept of the Republic of Azerbaijan*, developed by the Ministry of Culture, is one of the key outcomes of the public discussions. Based on a detailed analysis of global trends and the current situation and following the proposed goals and objectives, the *draft "Azerbaijani Culture - 2040" Concept* puts forward the eight main activity priorities for the cultural policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan to be implemented in a systematic, sustainable and interconnected manner such as Management in the field of Culture; Azerbaijani Language; Culture of Behavior and Culture of Knowledge; Literature; Art; Cultural Heritage; Creative Cultural Industries and Cultural Diplomacy.

To ensure the implementation of *the Concept of the Republic of Azerbaijan "Culture of Azerbaijan - 2040"*, it is planned to develop and fulfil the following primary executive documents:

- i. "Azerbaijani Language" – a state program on development, promotion and dissemination of the Azerbaijani language as an organic component of culture;
- ii. "National Literature" – a state program on the development of literature;
- iii. "National Art" – a state program on the development of art;
- iv. "Culture of Behaviour and Culture of Knowledge" – a state program on the development of the culture of behaviour and the culture of knowledge;
- v. "National Heritage" – a state program for the protection and development of the cultural and natural heritage of Azerbaijan;
- vi. "Creative Azerbaijan" – a state program for the development of cultural and creative industries in general;
- vii. "Development of the Audiovisual Industry" – a state program focused on cinematography, other audiovisual content, and related activities.

### *Historical background for the past 70 years*

1950-1960. Azerbaijan was part of the USSR, which occupied and liquidated the first secular parliamentary state in the East, the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (1918-1920). These were the years of transition to a political thaw. As a result, in 1953, the Ministry of Culture of the Azerbaijan SSR was established with minor powers.

1961-1970. The first signs of rejection of socialist realism's principles became visible at the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s. Since that period, the arts have gradually begun to emancipate themselves from the control of Soviet ideology.

1971-1980. Large-scale measures were taken to develop the economy, and numerous industrial enterprises were created in Azerbaijan. As a result, the republic obtained funding for culture and the arts, fostering an influential creative environment.

1981-1990. A powerful surge of national and cultural awareness, which soviet tanks were trying to crush on January 20, 1990, in the streets of Baku.

1991-2000. October 18, 1991, marks the day Azerbaijan regained its independence as the Republic of Azerbaijan. At the same time, it was the years of destruction of the historical and cultural heritage and infrastructure in the territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan occupied by Armenia, backed by third countries. The National Leader of Azerbaijan, Heydar Aliyev, returned to power in Azerbaijan at the people's request in 1993. Formation of independent statehood.

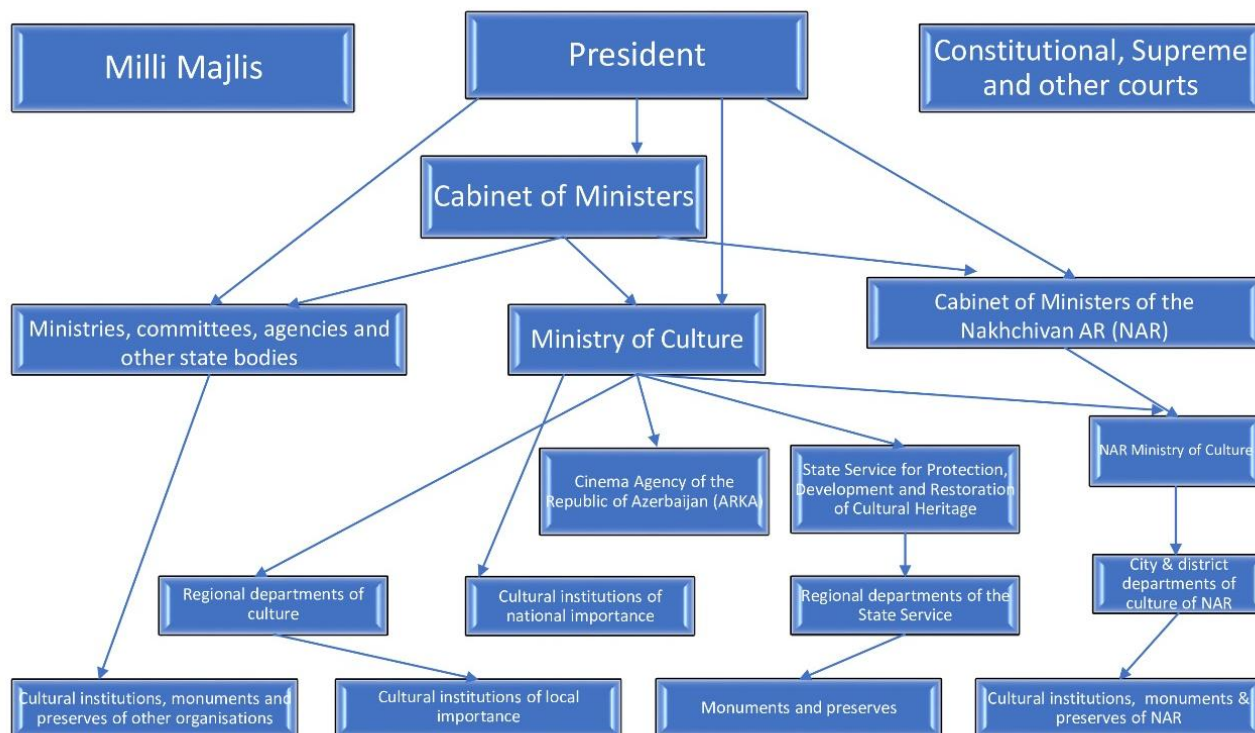
2001-2010. Years of establishing modern national cultural policy. Active cooperation with UNESCO, the Council of Europe, ICESCO and other international organisations.

2011-2020. The Republic of Azerbaijan initiates numerous international cultural programs and events and has become a serious global cultural and political player. The internationally recognised territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan was restored on November 10, 2020, which also meant restoring the country's cultural integrity.

2021-present. The Great Return to the liberated territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

## 1.2 Domestic governance system

### 1.2.1 ORGANISATIONAL ORGANIGRAM OF STATE CULTURAL POLICY ADMINISTRATION



### 1.2.2 NATIONAL AUTHORITIES

The Republic of Azerbaijan is a democratic, law-based, secular, unitary republic. The only source of state power in the Republic of Azerbaijan is the people of Azerbaijan. The [Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan](#), approved by a general referendum on November 12, 1995, establishes the principle of division of powers: the Milli Majlis of the Republic of Azerbaijan (Parliament) exercises legislative power, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan exercises executive power, and the Constitutional, Supreme and other law courts exercise judicial power.

[The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan](#) is the head of the state. He represents the state of Azerbaijan both within the country and in its foreign relations, embodies the unity of the Azerbaijani people, and ensures the continuity of Azerbaijani statehood. The President guarantees the independence and territorial integrity of the Azerbaijani state, as well as compliance with international treaties to which the Republic of Azerbaijan is a party, and ensures the independence of the judiciary. The President is elected for a 7-year term through general, direct, and equal elections, with a free, personal, and secret ballot. When establishing general rules, the President issues decrees and, on other matters, orders. The President appoints the Prime Minister with the consent of the Milli Majlis and establishes the Cabinet of Ministers to implement executive powers.



[The Milli Majlis of the Republic of Azerbaijan](#) is a one-chamber body comprising 125 deputies, elected through direct elections for a five-year term. The Culture Committee of the Milli Majlis is responsible for providing legislative support for the state's cultural policy by drafting laws concerning culture, including language, literature, the arts, museums, theatres, cinema, design, architecture, urban planning and development, library services, archival activities, and the protection of cultural heritage. The Committee also provides opinions on relevant draft laws that have already been submitted.

[The Constitutional Court of the Republic of Azerbaijan](#), [the Supreme Court of the Republic of Azerbaijan](#), the courts of appeal, general courts and other specialised courts of the Republic of Azerbaijan implement judicial power. Judicial power is exercised through constitutional, civil and criminal proceedings and other means prescribed by law.

[The Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan](#) prepares the draft state budget and submits it to the President; ensures the implementation of the state budget, financial credit and monetary policy, state economic programs and state social security programs; manages ministries and other central executive bodies; resolves other issues attributed to its powers by the President. The Cabinet of Ministers adopts decisions when establishing general rules and orders in other matters.

[The Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Azerbaijan](#) is the central executive body responsible for implementing state policy and regulations in the fields of culture, art, history, and the protection of cultural monuments, as well as publishing and cinematography. The Ministry of Culture manages the cultural sphere at a centralised and local level. The management of enterprises located in the regions (except for theatres and cinemas) is under the direct control of the regional cultural departments and indirectly under the relevant structural units of the ministry. Cultural institutions and organisations located in Baku that are of national importance and non-duplicated (for example, the Azerbaijan National Carpet Museum and the Azerbaijan National Library) are under the direct control and management of the relevant structural units of the ministry.

[The State Service for Protection, Development and Restoration of Cultural Heritage under the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Azerbaijan](#) was established by the [Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan \(No.409 of December 18, 2014\)](#). The State Service is the executive authority exercising state control in the field of protection of cultural heritage, use of immovable historical and cultural objects (monuments and reserves) under state protection, and their restoration, reconstruction, conservation and reconstruction, except for those under the jurisdiction of the State Tourism Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Administration of State Historical-Architectural Reserve "Icherisheher", and the Shusha City State Reserve Department.

["The Cinema Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan" \(ARKA\)](#) was established under the authority of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Azerbaijan by [Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan \(No.1667 of April 20, 2022\)](#). The Cinema Agency is a public legal entity engaged in local and joint film production, promoting cinematographic culture, encouraging the activities of cinematographic enterprises and film industry participants, applying new information and communication technologies and innovations in cinematography, and integrating Azerbaijani cinematography into the global film industry.

### 1.2.3 REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

Sixteen regional departments of culture in direct subordination to the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Azerbaijan were established by merging and enlarging the previous 64 dual (with city/district executive authorities) subordinated city and district departments of culture by Order of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan [\*On Improving the Structure of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Azerbaijan \(No.1932 of March 29, 2016\)\*](#). As a result, the regional management system in the cultural sector evolved into a more transparent and efficient model. Following the liberation of the occupied territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan and in alignment with its economic regions, the number of regional cultural departments within the Ministry of Culture was optimised by [\*Order of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan No.3766, issued on February 23, 2023\*](#). At present, 13 regional departments of culture, including Baku City Culture Head Department and Absheron–Khizi, Mountainous Shirvan, Ganja–Dashkasan, Karabakh, Gazakh–Tovuz, Guba–Khachmaz, Lankaran–Astara, Central Aran, Mil–Mughan, Shaki–Zagatala, East Zangezur, Shirvan–Salyan, are carrying out the direct management of state culture and art institutions of the capital city and the regions.

Five regional departments of the State Service for Protection, Development and Restoration of Cultural Heritage under the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Azerbaijan were established by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan [\*On Improving the Activity of the State Service for Protection, Development and Restoration of Cultural Heritage under the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Azerbaijan \(No.844 of October 22, 2019\)\*](#) to strengthen state control in protecting immovable historical and cultural monuments under state protection and ensure effective management on the regional level. According to this decree, the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan has approved the division of territorial affiliation among the Baku, Shabran, Gabala, Ganja, and Salyan regional departments of the State Service.

[The Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic](#) is an integral part of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Accordingly, the *Constitution* and laws of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the decrees of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan and decisions of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan, including those in the sphere of culture, are binding within the territory of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic of the Republic of Azerbaijan. At the same time, given the constitutional status of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, the Ministry of Culture of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic is responsible for developing and implementing regional cultural policy within its jurisdiction.

### 1.2.4 LOCAL AUTHORITIES

The Republic of Azerbaijan is administratively divided into 66 districts and 11 cities subordinate to the Republic. The districts are further divided into municipalities. Additionally, seven districts and one city are located within the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Territorial and administrative units are formed according to the [\*Law on the territorial structure and administrative-territorial division \(No.892-IQ of June 13, 2000\)\*](#).

The Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the central executive body responsible for implementing state cultural policy, manages the state cultural sphere locally through its

regional cultural departments and the regional departments of the State Service for Protection, Development and Restoration of Cultural Heritage under the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Local state institutions of culture and art, as well as monuments of history and culture, and several historical and cultural reserves, which are part of the Ministry of Culture's system, are funded from the central or regional budgets of the ministry.

Local institutions of culture in the system of the Ministry of Culture act under their model regulations approved by the [\*Decision of the Board of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Azerbaijan \(No.6/1 of November 8, 2018\)\*](#), such as:

- *The Model Regulations of History and Ethnography Museums;*
- *The Model Regulations on Centralized Library System;*
- *The Model Regulations of Children's Schools of Music, Art and Painting;*
- *The Model Regulations of City (District) Cultural Centres;*
- *The Model Regulations of City (district) Heydar Aliyev centres;*
- *The Model Regulations of State Art Galleries operating in the Regions of the Republic; etc.*

The Ministry of Culture and its subordinate bodies collaborate with city and district executive authorities and self-government bodies to implement the state cultural policy at the local level. [\*Regulations on local executive authorities \(No.648 of June 6, 2012\)\*](#) define the duties of the local executive power in the field of culture as follows:

- Implement the state policy in the field of culture in the relevant area;
- Make proposals on draft state programs for the development of culture and art and ensure the implementation of these programs in the appropriate location;
- Organise the protection of historical, cultural, and natural monuments and cultural heritage sites.

According to [\*Law on the Status of Municipalities \(No.698-IQ of July 2, 1999\)\*](#), municipalities may assist in developing cultural institutions and preserving historical and cultural monuments via local social protection and social development programs.

#### 1.2.5 MAIN NON-GOVERNMENTAL ACTORS

According to the [\*Concept of State Support to Non-governmental Organizations of the Republic of Azerbaijan \(No.2288 of July 27, 2007\)\*](#), developing culture and art is among the priority areas of state support for non-governmental organisations. It is essential to reiterate that, according to the [\*Law on Public Participation \(No.816-IVQ of November 22, 2013\)\*](#), provisions are made for citizens' and civil society institutions' involvement in developing and implementing state policy across various sectors of state and social life. It includes participation in decision-making processes at national and local levels as well as in organising public oversight over the activities of central executive power bodies, local executive power, and local self-government bodies as determined by the relevant executive power body.

[The Heydar Aliyev Foundation](#), which has been operating in the fields of education, health, culture, social development, and other areas since 2004, is the country's leading non-governmental actor influencing cultural policy. The Foundation actively participates in the preservation, restoration, and use of cultural values and historical and cultural monuments, as well as the implementation of musical projects and the organisation of art festivals and exhibitions.

The Azerbaijan Writers' Union, the Azerbaijan Composers' Union, the Azerbaijan Artists' Union, the Azerbaijan Theatre Workers' Union, the Azerbaijan Ashiq Union, the Azerbaijan Cinematographers' Union and the Azerbaijan Architects' Union are among the most proactive non-governmental organisations in the field of culture. They play a significant consultative and promotion role in corresponding spheres of culture, arts, and areas concerning ethics and cultural rights.

A public legal entity, the Agency of State Support to Non-Governmental Organizations of the Republic of Azerbaijan was established by the [Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan \(№ 1317 of April 19, 2021\)](#) based on the previous Council of State Support to Non-Governmental Organizations under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan functioned from 2007.

The new composition of the [Public Council under the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Azerbaijan](#) was determined to facilitate the participation of civil society institutions in the adoption of legislative acts concerning the Ministry of Culture and to organise public oversight of its activities. The Public Council, comprising representatives from nine civil society institutions, was established through elections held from July 17 to 20, 2023, with the direct participation of non-governmental organisations.

#### 1.2.6 TRANSVERSAL CO-OPERATION

Since drafting and implementing the national cultural policy requires the joint efforts of two or more institutions, the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Azerbaijan cooperates closely with other ministries, state committees, and corresponding state bodies within the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan. At the same time, regional cultural events and policies are coordinated with local executive authorities where necessary.

Issues related to legislation on culture are discussed with the [Parliamentary Committee on Culture of the Milli Majlis of the Republic of Azerbaijan](#), and all types of regulations are reviewed with the [Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Azerbaijan](#). Arising copyright issues are agreed upon with the [Intellectual Property Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan](#).

Funding for cultural activities is closely coordinated with the [Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Azerbaijan](#). The infrastructure provision of cultural institutions is coordinated with the [Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Azerbaijan](#) and, where necessary, with the [State Committee for Urban Planning and Architecture of the Republic of Azerbaijan](#). Likewise, projects in information and communication technologies are discussed, if needed, with the [Ministry of Digital Development and Transport of the Republic of Azerbaijan](#).

The Ministry of Culture's leading partners in education, training and research in culture are the [Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan](#) and the affiliated research institutes of the [Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences](#). Cooperation on human resources

issues has been established with the [State Examination Centre of the Republic of Azerbaijan](#), the [Ministry of Youth and Sport of the Republic of Azerbaijan](#), and the [State Committee on Family, Women and Children's Issues of the Republic of Azerbaijan](#). Additionally, the [Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Population of the Republic of Azerbaijan](#) oversees the social welfare of workers.

Multilateral cooperation within the frameworks of international organisations and international bilateral relations with foreign countries are coordinated with the [Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan](#), while diaspora issues are under the jurisdiction of the [State Committee on Work with Diaspora of the Republic of Azerbaijan](#).

[The State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan](#) collects statistics data annually for further processing and systematisation.

In some cases, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Cabinet of Ministers establish specific organising committees and working groups comprising representatives from various levels of government to facilitate inter-ministerial cooperation and implement long-term state programs or concrete projects. The government can also establish commissions to prepare national reports for international organisations.

### **1.3 Cultural institutions**

#### **1.3.1 OVERVIEW OF CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS**

The Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Azerbaijan oversees most public museums, art galleries, concert halls, theatres, libraries, cinemas, children's music, arts, painting schools, cultural houses, and other public cultural institutions. The Cinema Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan (ARKA) manages public cinemas, film funds, and film production companies under the Ministry of Culture. The Ministry of Culture of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic is responsible for public cultural institutions, cultural and historical monuments, archaeological sites, and historical, cultural, architectural, artistic, and ethnographic reserves located within the territory of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic.

Other government and non-government agencies of the Republic of Azerbaijan run a small fraction of public cultural institutions; for example, public libraries are also distributed between the State Oil Company (2), the Azerbaijan Trade Union Confederation (3), and other state bodies (29). Public museums are also managed by the Ministry of Science and Education (2), the Ministry of Health (1), the Ministry of Agriculture (1), the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources (1), the Ministry of Internal Affairs (1), State Oil Company (1) and other bodies (5). Public club enterprises are also distributed between the State Oil Company (1 library), the Azerbaijan Trade Union Confederation (4), and other state bodies (20). The National Archive Fund manages archive institutions, totalling 78 in the country.

The State Service for Protection, Development, and Restoration of Cultural Heritage, under the Ministry of Culture, manages most cultural and historical monuments, as well as archaeological monuments (70.34%), and historical, cultural, architectural, artistic, and ethnographic reserves (44.83%). The Administration of State Historical-Architectural Reserve "Icherisheher", the Reserves Management Centre under the State Tourism Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Ministry of Culture of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, and



the Shusha City State Reserve Department also manage a certain number of immovable cultural heritage sites.

In recent years, the Ministry of Culture has conducted targeted work to support the development of private cultural and creative industries (CCI), which has already brought tangible results. According to the ministry's statistics, the number of enterprises engaged in CCI increased from 5,886 units in 2022 to 6,826 units in 2024, representing a 15.97% rise. The total number of business entities under the CCI increased from 21,022 in 2022 to 22,852 in 2024, representing an 8.71% rise. The fields of activities include publishing and printing, jewellery production, musical instrument manufacturing, computer game development, film and video production and distribution, television programming, news agency operations, video and sound recording activities, music publishing, radio programme broadcasting, television programme compilation and broadcasting, information agency activities, architecture, advertising agency operations, specialised design, photography, audio-visual services, educational activities in culture, performing arts and other artistic fields, theatre and concert hall operations, library and archive services, museum activities, and the protection of historical sites and buildings, among others.

### 1.3.2 DATA ON SELECTED PUBLIC CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

**Table 1: Selected public cultural institutions by sector and domain**

Domain	Cultural institutions (subdomains)	Number (2024)	Trend last 5 years (In %)
<b>Cultural heritage</b>	Historical and cultural monuments (registered)	6 150	↑ 1.89%
	Historical, cultural, architectural, artistic and ethnographic reserves	29	↑ 3.57%
<b>Museums</b>	Museum institutions	245	↑ 2.51%
<b>Archives</b>	Archive institutions	78	0%
<b>Visual arts</b>	Public art galleries	36	0%
<b>Performing arts</b>	Professional theatres	29	0%
	Concert organisations	17	↑ 6.25%
<b>Libraries</b>	Libraries	2 725	0%
<b>Audiovisual</b>	Cinemas	2	0%
	Film Funds	2	0%
	Film production companies	1	0%
<b>Interdisciplinary</b>	Socio-cultural centres / cultural houses	2 058	↓ 8.29%
	Child musical, art and painting schools	237	0%

Sources: [The State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 2024](#)

### 1.3.3 PUBLIC CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS: TRENDS AND STRATEGIES

As culture in the Republic of Azerbaijan receives solid and comprehensive state support, public cultural institutions operate across all areas of cultural activity. Archaeological, architectural, garden-park, monumental, memorial, decorative, and applied art monuments and cultural, architectural, art, and ethnographic reserves form immovable cultural heritage. Museums of history, memory, ethnography, art, and archives and libraries protect movable cultural heritage. The centres of culture, houses of culture, and clubs represent the infrastructure of intangible cultural heritage, encompassing folklore, local lore, and crafts. Concert halls, theatres, art galleries, and exhibition halls are places where professional art is widespread. Music, dance, and art schools nurture professional skills and professional audiences. Finally, public film studios, cinemas, and publishing houses represent the public institutions of the cultural industry.

However, traditionally, there have been significant differences in approaches to managing and funding the heritage, arts, and cultural industries sectors. Generally speaking, it is striking that when examining these domains, the institutions and organisations related to cultural heritage (immovable, movable, and intangible) are predominantly managed by state bodies. In contrast, various forms of organisation in cultural industries tend to be more concentrated in the private and non-state spheres. Professional art, encompassing music, theatre, and the fine arts, occupies a middle position on this public-private spectrum. In terms of preserving traditions and training personnel, state institutions primarily dominate. Nevertheless, the performing arts and concert activities are more commercial and inclined towards monetisation. Furthermore, many arts and cultural activities, such as festivals, concerts, and fairs, whether international or local, attract considerable sponsorship from the private sector.

It is challenging to overestimate the importance and significance of cultural institutions as infrastructural units of almost all cultural domains and subdomains; improving cultural infrastructure has received considerable attention in the Republic of Azerbaijan. In this regard, two concepts developed by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Azerbaijan for cultural infrastructure in recent years are worth noting: the concept of "Cultural and Creative Industries Development Centers" and the concept of "Multifunctional Art Centres."

Implementing the Cultural and Creative Industries Development Centre (Creative Centre) concept commenced with the inauguration of the first Creative Centre in Baku on December 28, 2024. The main goal of the Creative Centre is to support young talents, improve their qualifications, and create conditions for realising their creative potential. It will also implement projects in the cultural and creative industries, supporting the formation and development of new entrepreneurial entities and start-ups. Additionally, it will help create and increase the export of local creative products and services, as well as attract talented young people from the regions. The Creative Centre is implementing several successful projects, including three incubation programs: Music, Gametech, and Cultech. Twenty new start-ups have already been established within the framework of these programs, and more than 50 residents currently utilise the Centre's services. It is envisaged that the "Creative Centre" concept will be expanded to other regions of the country.

The idea of Multifunctional Art Centres arose from the need to restore the cultural institutions that were utterly destroyed during 30 years of occupation in the liberated territories of the

Karabakh and Eastern Zangezur regions of the Republic of Azerbaijan. These centres' multifunctionality means combining a cultural centre, library, gallery, museum, creative industries, audiovisual and digital content. The areas for activities will include a multifunctional hall, open-air theatre, reading and choreography halls, meetings, academic study, rehearsal, training, association, makeup and interactive storytelling rooms, audiovisual studio, coworking centre, commercial and business offices, art workshop, sales point for paintings, sculptures and musical instrument, etc.

## **1.4 International cooperation**

### **1.4.1 PUBLIC ACTORS AND CULTURAL DIPLOMACY**

Recognising the significance of international cooperation as a vital component in positioning and developing the country within the globalised world, promoting national cultural values on the global stage, and fostering intercultural dialogue, cultural diplomacy plays a crucial role in the national cultural policy implemented in the Republic of Azerbaijan. The main sectors of the cultural diplomacy implemented are multilateral international cooperation with global and regional organisations in the field of culture, enhancement and expansion of bilateral international relations in culture with foreign countries, effective functioning of the Azerbaijani cultural centres in foreign countries, and consulting, methodical, organisational, technical, and other assistance to the cultural centres founded by the Azerbaijani diaspora.

Promoting national culture and the Azerbaijani multicultural model internationally, strengthening positions in profile international organisations, recognising Azerbaijan as a centre for intercultural dialogue, international awareness raising regarding the state of cultural heritage in the liberated territories, returning stolen cultural assets, establishing direct and effective cooperation between national cultural institutions and their partners abroad, promoting the export of Azerbaijani national cultural products (crafts, literature, music), transforming Azerbaijan into a regional hub in the field of cultural and creative industries are among the declared directions of state cultural diplomacy implemented in recent years.

The Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Azerbaijan drafts and implements bilateral and multilateral foreign cultural policy in coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the central executive body in Azerbaijan responsible for implementing all international relations and cooperation issues. The Republic considers developing and strengthening global standard-setting activities essential and has acceded to numerous international conventions.

As a result of active participation in the work of international organisations, the Republic of Azerbaijan was elected as a member of the following electoral bodies:

- The Executive Board of UNESCO (2005-2009);
- The Consultative Council for Implementing the Cultural Strategy for the Islamic World (ICESCO, 2005-2008);
- The Intergovernmental Committee for the Restoration and Promotion of the Return of Illegally Acquired Cultural Property (UNESCO, 2011-2015);



- The Committee for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (UNESCO, 2011-2015 and 2015-2019);
- The World Heritage Committee (UNESCO, 2015-2019);
- The Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (UNESCO, 2018-2022);
- The Intergovernmental Committee of the Convention for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions<sup>2</sup> (UNESCO, 2019-2023);
- The Subsidiary Committee of the Meeting of States Parties to the 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (UNESCO, 2023-2027);
- The Scientific Committee of the Asian Cultural Heritage Alliance (ACHA, 2024 - present); and
- The Islamic World Heritage Committee (IWHC) of the Islamic World Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (ICESCO) (2024 - present).
- The ICESCO regional office has operated in Baku, Azerbaijan, since 2024.

The country is also interested in hosting global international cultural events: the Baku Process, launched in 2008, the 7th Global Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC), held in Baku, Azerbaijan (2016), and the biannual Baku World Forums on Intercultural Dialogue (2011-2024) are some examples of Azerbaijan's global cultural activity.

The Government develops bilateral international relations and implements intergovernmental and interdepartmental agreements, programs, protocols and other documents to promote Azerbaijani culture and arts internationally. A legal framework for cultural cooperation with more than 40 countries exists; nine agreements were updated in 2023-2024.

Participation in Intergovernmental Commissions and Working Groups is essential in developing international bilateral relations in culture. Thus, the Ministry of Culture participated in the meetings of the 19 Intergovernmental Commissions in 2023 (including Hungary, Israel, Serbia, Lithuania, Romania, India, Morocco, Great Britain, etc.) and the 14 Intergovernmental Commissions in 2024 (including Albania, Montenegro, Bulgaria, Uzbekistan, Serbia, the United Arab Emirates, etc.). The traditional form of bilateral international cultural cooperation involves mutual days of culture. During 2023-2024, cultural days from six countries (Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, etc.) were held in Azerbaijan, while Azerbaijani culture days took place in four countries (Albania, Qatar, etc.).

Azerbaijan Cultural Centres operate under the diplomatic missions of the Republic of Azerbaijan in Austria, Germany, Türkiye, France, Uzbekistan and Italy. The Ministry of Culture organises the activities of the Cultural Centres, carries out coordination work and promotes national culture through the Centres. Established relatively recently, these centres are

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<sup>2</sup> The Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are the central ministries responsible for implementing and monitoring the UNESCO Convention for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions in the Republic of Azerbaijan.

becoming increasingly active; thus, more than 90 and over 150 cultural events were organised in 2023 and 2024, respectively.

[\*The State Program for 2022–2028 on the Education of Young People in Prestigious Higher Education Institutions in Foreign Countries \(No.3163 of February 28, 2022\)\*](#) aims to facilitate the studies of Azerbaijani students at the world's top universities. All expenses for those admitted to the programme during their study period, including airfare, visa costs, living expenses, and tuition fees, are covered by the state.

Twenty people have been provided with financial support for Bachelor's and Master's studies abroad (Great Britain, Germany, USA, Türkiye, Italy, France, Austria) within the "Special Scholarship Program for Cultural and Creative Industries" established by the Ministry of Culture.

#### 1.4.2 EUROPEAN / INTERNATIONAL ACTORS AND PROGRAMMES

The primary multilateral partners of the Republic of Azerbaijan in international cultural policy since regaining independence include UNESCO, the UN Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC), the UN World Tourism Organization, the Council of Europe, the European Union, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO), the Organisation of Turkic States (OTS), International Organization of Turkic Culture (TURKSOY), the International Turkic Culture and Heritage Foundation (ITCHF), Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRSICA), among others.

In 1999, Azerbaijan joined the CoE/ERICarts comparative research project and online database, which features in-depth information on cultural policies, statistics, and trends, titled "Cultural Policy in Europe: A Compendium of Key Facts and Trends." The 10th-anniversary meeting of the project "Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends in Europe" was held in Baku on 4-5 December 2008, with the participation of prominent researchers in cultural policy from member countries of the Council of Europe and the ICESCO. The Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Azerbaijan has been a [stakeholder member of the Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends Association](#) since 2021.

"Icheri Sheher, Maiden Tower and Shirvanshahs Palace Complex" (2000), "Gobustan Rock Art Cultural Landscape" (2007), "Historical Centre of Sheki together with Khan Palace" (2019), "Hyrcanian Forests" (2023) and "Cultural Landscape of Khinalig People and "Köç Yolu" Transhumance Route", overall, five sites are included in the UNESCO World Heritage List. "Prehistoric sites of the Azykh and Taghlar caves", "Khudafarin Bridges and related sites", "Ancient Gabala City", and "Gamigaya and Goy-gol Historical-Cultural and Natural Complex" added in 2023-2024, overall, 12 sites of the Republic of Azerbaijan are included into Tentative List of UNESCO World Heritage.

With 24 elements in UNESCO's intangible heritage lists ("Azerbaijani Mugham", "Art of Azerbaijani Ashiq", "Novruz", "Azerbaijani carpet weaving art", "Chovqan, a traditional Karabakh horse-riding game", "Yalli (Kochari, Tenzere), traditional group dances of Nakhchivan", et cetera), Azerbaijan ranks 5th among 194 UNESCO member-states. 5 elements including "Craftsmanship and performing art of balaban/mey", "Tandir craftsmanship and bread baking in Azerbaijan" were added in 2023-2024.

Three cities in the Republic of Azerbaijan have been added to the UNESCO Creative Cities Network: Sheki, recognised in the 'Arts and Crafts' category (2017); Baku, acknowledged in the 'Design' category (2019); and Lankaran, celebrated in the 'Gastronomy' category (2021).

ICESCO declared Baku the Cultural Capital of the Islamic World for 2009, Nakhchivan the Cultural Capital of the Islamic World for 2018, and Shusha the Cultural Capital of the Islamic World for 2024.

Ten elements of the intangible cultural heritage of Azerbaijan have been inscribed on the Islamic World Heritage List: "Yalli (Kochari, Tenzere) traditional group dances of Nakhchivan"; "Dolma making and sharing tradition, a marker of cultural identity"; "Pehlevanlig culture, traditional "Zorkhana" games, sports and wrestling"; "Azerbaijani Mugham"; "Copper craftsmanship of Lahij"; "Chovgan - traditional Karabakh horse-riding game"; "Art of Azerbaijani Ashig"; "Traditional art and symbolism of Kelaghayi, making and wearing women's silk headscarves"; "Craftsmanship and performance art of the Tar, a long-necked string musical instrument"; "Traditional art of carpet weaving in Azerbaijan".

The nominations "Shusha Historical-Architectural Reserve" and "Aghdam Imarat Complex and Juma Mosque" have been included in the ICESCO Preliminary List of the Islamic World Heritage.

TURKSOY declared Sheki the Culture and Arts Capital of the Turkic World for 2016 and Shusha the Culture and Arts Capital of the Turkic World for 2023.

The Turkic Culture and Heritage Foundation (TCHF) and the Ministry of Culture signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 2024.

Azerbaijan presented the "Culture for Climate" (C4C) initiative during the 29th session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP29) held in Baku, Azerbaijan (November 2024).

#### 1.4.3 NGO'S AND DIRECT PROFESSIONAL COOPERATION

The state encourages transnational cooperation among arts and heritage institutions, professional associations, networks, and other non-governmental organization (NGO) actors in cultural policy, heritage protection, theatre, dance, film, music, and other fields. The Ministry of Culture funds yearly membership fees to several international organisations. Additionally, it supports the participation of Azerbaijani specialists at European Music Council conferences, World Congresses of Dance Researchers, and European Council of Artists conferences, among others.

Each higher education institution in the field of culture, the Baku Academy of Music, the Baku Choreography Academy, the State University of Culture and the Arts, the Azerbaijan National Music Academy, and the Azerbaijan State Academy of Fine Arts carry out various international activities. Moreover, they all have agreements with leading foreign higher education institutions regarding the training of students, exchanging experiences, and implementing joint projects.

The Azerbaijan Writers' Union, the Azerbaijan Composers' Union, the Azerbaijan Artists' Union, the Azerbaijan Theatre Workers' Union, the Azerbaijan Ashiq Union, the Azerbaijan Cinematographers' Union, the Azerbaijan Architects' Union, the Azerbaijan Journalists' Union,

Azerbaijan National Culinary Association and other creative unions and professional cultural networks have extensive ties around the world with their foreign colleagues and similar organisations. They organise joint events, exhibitions, and concerts, hold international festivals and competitions, and implement mutually beneficial projects in their areas of activity.

Large cultural institutions, including libraries, museums, cinematographic institutions, publishing houses, art galleries, reserves, and research centres, conduct active international activities independently, with the support of government agencies as needed.

Organising international festivals is also an effective tool for backing direct professional cooperation, and the Ministry of Culture, together with the Heydar Aliyev Foundation, organises national and international festivals, such as regular International Mugham Festivals, the International Music Festivals in memory of Uzeyir Hajibeyli, the International Qabala Music Festivals, and so on.

## 2. Current cultural affairs

### 2.1 Key developments

A sustainably growing competitive economy, a dynamic, inclusive and socially just society; a competitive human capital and a space for modern innovations; a great return to the liberated territories; and a country of clean environment and “green growth” are five national priorities according to [\*Azerbaijan 2030: National Priorities for Socio-Economic Development \(No.2469 of February 2, 2021\)\*](#).

The I State Program on the Great Return to the Liberated Territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan (No. 3587 of November 16, 2022) aims to facilitate the rapid reconstruction and revitalisation of the Karabakh and East Zangezur economic regions, as well as the sustainable settlement of the population and promote economic development. The State Program's important activities include revitalising cultural life, restoring cultural infrastructure and heritage sites, including restoration, conservation, reconstruction, and regeneration works at historical and cultural monuments; construction and restoration of entirely or partially destroyed museums; implementation of measures related to the creation of the Occupation and Victory Museum complexes; taking measures to re-establish cultural institutions, facilities, and artistic collectives to organise cultural services; holding cultural events and projects, including festivals and poetry days; et cetera.

As a result of the monitoring and inventory work carried out during 2023-2024, 354 monuments were inventoried, and 402 objects of historical, architectural, and archaeological significance were identified. One hundred sixty-nine monuments were identified as needing restoration and conservation work at the initial stage, and the amount of material damage to 434 monuments in the liberated territories was calculated. During the inventory work, field research was conducted, electronic maps of the monuments were prepared, high-quality photography and drone filming was undertaken, archival documents were examined, and other relevant sources were reviewed. The inventory of historical monuments in the liberated territories has already been completed, and their restoration has begun.

The Uzeyir Hajibeyli House Museum in Shusha, the Shusha branch of the Azerbaijan National Carpet Museum, the Bulbul House Museum in Shusha, and the Aghdam İmarat Complex have been restored. Work continues on two projects: the restoration of the State Drama Theatre building in Khankendi and the restoration of the Askeran Fortress Complex in the Khojaly region.

The creation, design, and content preparation of the Occupation and Victory Museum complexes in the cities of Aghdam, Fuzuli, Jabrayil, Zangilan, Kalbajar, Gubadli, Lachin, Shusha, and Khankendi are ongoing.

On March 12, 2024, the opening ceremony of the Kurmangazy Children's Creativity Centre, constructed in the city of Fuzuli at the initiative and under the financing of the Republic of Kazakhstan, took place. The centre offers courses and clubs in art and sculpture, carpet weaving, choreography, vocals, music, web design, photography and videography, robotics, 3D modelling, cooking, chess, and more.

On November 5, 2024, the opening ceremony of the Aghdam Mugham Centre took place. The Centre have classrooms, concert halls, performance halls, an open-air amphitheatre, and other necessary infrastructure.

The “Khari Bulbul” International Music Festival (May 9-11, 2023 and May 11-13, 2024) and Vagif Poetry Days (July 14-15, 2023 and July 17-19, 2014) were jointly organised in Shusha City by the Heydar Aliyev Foundation, the Ministry of Culture and the Shusha City State Reserve Department.

## **2.2 Cultural rights and ethics**

Fundamental rights, including cultural rights, in the Republic of Azerbaijan are defined within the legislative system, consisting of the following normative-legal acts: the [\*Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan \(No.00 of November 12, 1995\)\*](#); acts adopted by referendum; laws; decrees of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan; decisions of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan; normative acts of central executive bodies. Additionally, international agreements to which the Republic of Azerbaijan is a party are integral to the country's legislative system. Individual professional or creative groups can also establish their own internal ethical rules, as outlined in their internal statutes.

The *Constitution* defines the fundamental rights and freedoms that underlie cultural rights and serves as the foundation for these rights. The *Constitution* enshrines cultural rights, including rights to intellectual property, culture, education, national identity, the use of one's native language, and the protection of honour and dignity. Constitutional freedoms are freedom of thought, speech, conscience, information, and creative activity. At the same time, the *Constitution* defines the fundamental duties of citizens. A noteworthy fact is Article 77 of the Constitution, which states, "Every citizen shall have the duty to protect historical and cultural monuments."

The [\*Law on Culture \(No.506-IVQ of December 21, 2012\)\*](#), in more detail, dwells on cultural rights, the definition and regulation of which is devoted to an entire Chapter 3 ("Main human and civil rights in the field of culture") and such articles as:

- The right to participate in cultural life;
- The right to cultural identity;
- Freedom of creativity;
- The right to cultural activities abroad;
- Property rights in the field of culture;
- Foreign trade in cultural assets;
- The right to entrepreneurship in the field of culture;
- The right to use cultural institutions and cultural property;
- The right to education in the field of culture;
- Non-governmental organisations in the field of culture; and
- Freedom of information in the field of culture.

The law provides that everyone's rights and freedoms in the field of culture in the Republic of Azerbaijan are guided by the principles and norms of international law. Therefore, the state guarantees everyone the right to exercise their rights and freedoms in the field of culture, regardless of gender, race, language, religion, political beliefs, nationality, social status, social



origin, health, opportunities, and membership in public associations. The state ensures the equality of cultures, rights, and freedoms of peoples and national minorities living within its territory, as well as the equality of peoples and national minorities in preserving their culture, determining their cultural identity, and restoring, strengthening, and developing their cultural heritage. Additionally, cultural rights should not exceed the Prohibitions in the field of culture established by Article 43 of the *Law on Culture*. Therefore, the following actions are not allowed in the area of culture:

- To conduct propaganda that may harm the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, constitutional order, economic, defence, scientific and technical potential and national interests of the Republic of Azerbaijan;
- To hold cultural events aimed at propagating and promoting war, social, racial, national, religious, class and generational superiority;
- To hold cultural events aimed at calling for the promotion and encouragement of violence, pornography and drugs;
- Illegal export of samples of national cultural heritage from the territory of the Azerbaijan Republic;
- Restriction of fundamental human and civil rights and freedoms in the field of culture, regardless of race, nationality, religion, language, social origin, the position of service, beliefs, and affiliation to public associations;
- The use of cultural and natural heritage incompatible with its historical and artistic purpose;
- Copying of cultural values and their use for tourism, excursion and advertising purposes without the consent of the owner or user;
- Demolition, destruction, fragmentation, reorganisation, relocation and change of appearance of cultural values.

In the context of the paragraph, mention should also be made of the [\*Law on the Rules of Ethical Conduct of Civil Servants \(No.352-IIIQ of May 31, 2007\)\*](#), which explicitly obliges civil servants (including those in the field of culture) to adhere to professional, ethical, and cultural behaviour.

### **2.3 Role of artists and cultural professionals**

The [\*Law on Culture \(No.506-IVQ of December 21, 2012\)\*](#) defines a creative person as an individual who creates cultural values, including pedagogical and scientific research activities within the cultural sector. Protecting the rights of creative individuals operating in both state and private cultural institutions and implementing creative activities are among the main directions of state policy in culture. Moreover, the organisation of incentives for cultural workers and creative individuals for their services and contributions to cultural development is among the state's duties in the cultural field. Creative persons, legal entities, cultural institutions and non-governmental organisations may be the subjects of cultural activity. Article 24 of the law states, "Anyone can engage in professional or amateur creative activities. The state supports creative activity in the Republic of Azerbaijan. The state takes economic measures to develop professional creativity".

The [\*Law on Non-Governmental Organizations \(Public Associations and Foundations\) \(No.894-IQ of June 13, 2000\)\*](#) determines the rules for establishing, operating, reorganising, and

liquidating non-governmental organisations as legal entities and their relations with public authorities.

[\*The Rules for Preparation, Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation of State Programs \(No.1294 of March 6, 2021\)\*](#) requires that public hearings and discussions must be provided during the preparation of the draft of any state programs, strategies, national action plans, concepts and other similar documents, including in the field of culture. Furthermore, [\*the Law on Public Participation \(№ 816-IVQ of November 22, 2013\)\*](#) prescribes such public hearings and discussions.

A multi-branched system of creative unions continues to function and operate mainly as professional unions and play an essential role in cultural life as well as in preparation strategies to stimulate employment and a better social situation for artists and cultural professionals:

- [The Azerbaijan Writers' Union](#), established in 1934, is the largest public organisation of Azerbaijani writers, poets, and translators.
- [The Azerbaijan Composers' Union](#) (established in 1934) unites in its ranks highly qualified professional composers and musicologists;
- [The Azerbaijan Architects' Union](#) (established in 1934) focuses on improving the effectiveness of all types of architectural work, developing architectural and urban planning activities, strengthening international cooperation and developing national culture;
- [The Azerbaijan Cinematographers' Union](#) (established in 1963) is a public organisation that voluntarily unites professional creative cinema workers in Azerbaijan;
- [The Azerbaijan Artists' Union](#) (established in 1940) is a public creative organisation of professional artists and art critics;
- [The Azerbaijan Theatre Workers' Union](#), founded in 1897 as the "Union of Actors", is an extensive public organisation uniting theatrical figures in Azerbaijan;
- [The Azerbaijan Ashiq Union](#) (established in 1982) is an independent public organisation that develops and promotes the Art of Ashiq.

## **2.4 Digital policy and developments**

According to the country's general state policy on digital development, implementing new information and communication technologies in the cultural sector is a key priority of Azerbaijan's national cultural policy. The [\*Socio-Economic Development Strategy of the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2022-2026 \(No.3378 of July 22, 2022\)\*](#) outlines tasks for digitalising Azerbaijani culture through "e-culture." In this regard, by Decision No. 3/2 of the Collegium of the Ministry of Culture dated October 13, 2023, the *Ministry of Culture's "e-Culture" Digital Development Strategy (2024-2026)* was adopted, and 100+ measures were planned to be implemented by 2026 under 10 priorities, such as Application of new technologies and technological innovations in the field of culture; Strengthening and ensuring the relevance of ICT infrastructure; Improving the regulatory and legal framework for the digitisation of culture; Electronification and integration of services in the field of culture; Formation of a data-based digital management model, its implementation and creation of forecasting opportunities through analytical tools; Improvement of information resources (systems, resources and registers), formation, integration and ensuring the relevance of new resources; Development of relevant modules for each cluster of the cultural sector and implementation



of a unified administration policy for various modules; Migration to the "Government Cloud" ("G-Cloud"); Cybersecurity, licensing and personal data protection in the field of culture; and Formation of digital culture, specialisation of personnel potential.

Within the framework of the "e-Culture" strategy, recently:

- The Ministry of Culture's "e-Culture" unified personal cabinet was formed, and all relevant resources were integrated into the cabinet,
- Integration into information systems across the country ("Digital Login", "Digital Document Circulation", "Normative legal acts", etc.) was implemented,
- The relevant information systems of the Ministry of Culture, where personal data is collected and processed, were included in the "State Register of Information Systems of Personal Data";
- The relevant information systems and resources of the Ministry of Culture were fully migrated to the "Government Cloud" infrastructure;
- For the first time in the history of the Ministry of Culture, "Admission of students to art schools and centres", "Additional admission of students to priority specialities", "Admission of teachers", "Additional admission of teachers to vacant positions" and "Admission of directors and deputy directors" were carried out electronically through relevant information systems;
- 50,000+ "e-Applications" were received, processed and responded to under 10 "e-Application" modules;
- A new official Internet information resource of the Ministry of Culture, "culture.gov.az", was formed, necessary audits were conducted together with relevant agencies, and its placement in the Information Resource Centre for State Institutions under the control of the Special Communication and Information State Service was ensured;
- For the first time in the history of the Ministry of Culture, a digital analytical analysis was conducted on five processes and data-based decision-making was ensured;
- Digitalization of internal management processes in 6 directions was initiated.

As a continuation of the activities carried out within the framework of the "e-Culture" strategy, the Formation of a Unified Cultural Register, which includes many sub-registers; Expansion of activities on the formation of information resources, electronification of services and applications; Increasing integration into information systems across the country; Expansion of the functionality of the "MyCulture" unified personal cabinet "v2.0"; Diversification of the digitalisation of internal management processes, etc. is planned to be implemented, and the necessary activities have already been initiated in the mentioned directions.

The [\*Digital Development Concept in the Republic of Azerbaijan \(No.287 of January 16, 2025\)\*](#) aims to enhance public administration, stimulate economic growth, and improve the quality of life for citizens by adopting digital technologies.

The [\*Artificial Intelligence Strategy of the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2025–2028 \(dated March 19, 2025\)\*](#) involves the establishment of an Artificial Intelligence Academy, improving information technologies and their management mechanisms for artificial intelligence, ensuring the accessibility of its infrastructure, strengthening the potential of qualified personnel, etc.

## 2.5 Cultural and social diversity

### 2.5.1 NATIONAL / INTERNATIONAL INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

The multinational and multi-confessional nature of the Azerbaijan population is an essential aspect of intercultural dialogue, one of the national cultural policy priorities. The fundamental spirit of the national policy stems from the [\*Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan \(No.00 of November 12, 1995\)\*](#), which proclaims that all citizens are equal, regardless of their ethnic or racial origin. The [\*Law on Joining the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination \(No.95-IQ of May 31, 1996\)\*](#) has been incorporated into the [\*Law on Culture \(No.506-IVQ of December 21, 2012\)\*](#) and other relevant laws. The [\*Law on Accession to the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities \(No. 897-IQ of June 16, 2000\)\*](#) was adopted in 2000. The leading public actor responsible for implementing programs and policies to promote intercultural dialogue in the Republic of Azerbaijan at national and local policy levels is the Ministry of Culture, which closely cooperates with other state bodies, depending on the matter under consideration.

The Ministry of Culture has implemented the "Cultural Diversity in Azerbaijan" project to highlight the country's rich ethnic and cultural diversity. It involved the cultural associations of the various national minorities and helped realise one of its chief strategic aims – developing and supporting intercultural dialogue. Another significant event, the traditional festival "Azerbaijan – my motherland", was organised by the Ministry of Culture in November 2006, October 2008, November 2011, June 2014, and June 2016. Scientific conferences, photo exhibitions, preliminary concert performances, and gala concerts held within the framework of the festivals attracted thousands of participants from various regions, representing nearly all national minorities and ethnic groups residing in Azerbaijan.

In 2009, the Republic of Azerbaijan joined the [\*UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions \(No.918-IIIQ of November 26, 2009\)\*](#). Furthermore, establishing the [\*Baku International Multiculturalism Centre\*](#), as outlined in the [\*Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan \(No.167 of May 15, 2014\)\*](#), testifies to the country's commitment to tolerance and multiculturalism. 2016 was declared the Year of Multiculturalism in the Republic of Azerbaijan to preserve, develop, and promote multicultural traditions, mutual understanding, and dialogue.

[\*The Baku Process\*](#) is rooted in Azerbaijan's unique interregional characteristics, which stem from its geographical location, social and political aspirations, and rich historical and cultural traditions. Proceeding from this, with the modern Republic of Azerbaijan being, at that time, the only state member of both the Council of Europe and the Islamic World Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (ICESCO), the Baku Process was initiated by the Republic of Azerbaijan to bring these regions closer.

Formalising the Baku Process involved three initial stages:

- I. Organising a Council of Europe Conference of Culture Ministers in Baku, to which ICESCO and several of its member states were invited (December 2-3, 2008), on the theme of "Intercultural Dialogue as a Basis for Peace and Sustainable Development in Europe and its Neighbouring Regions".

- II. Holding an ICESCO Conference of Culture Ministers in Baku, to which the Council of Europe and some of its member states were invited (October 13-15, 2009), following the celebration of Baku as the Cultural Capital of the Islamic World for 2009.
- III. Establishing a biennial Baku World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue with the participation of relevant intergovernmental organisations, culture ministers, and people worldwide.

The Baku World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue has taken responsibility for delivering the following:

- *The Global Agenda on the Dialogue among Civilisations adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (2001),*
- *The UNESCO Convention on Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005),*
- *The ICESCO Islamic Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2004),*
- *The Declaration and the Action Plan of the Third Summit of Heads of States and Governments of the Council of Europe (2005),*
- *The Council of Europe's White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue (2008),*
- *The Baku Declaration for the Promotion of Intercultural Dialogue (2008).*

In cooperation with UNESCO, the UN Alliance of Civilizations, the UN World Tourism Organization, the Council of Europe, and ICESCO, with the participation of culture ministers of numerous states, heads of leading international organisations, mayors of various world cities, diplomats, media organisations, international NGOs, scientists, scholars, distinguished cultural experts, practitioners, intellectuals and activists, the Republic of Azerbaijan has already hosted:

- The First Baku World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue on "United Through Common Values, Enriched by Cultural Diversity" (April 7-9, 2011);
- The Second Baku World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue on the subject of "Living Together Peacefully in a Diverse World" (May 29 - June 1, 2013);
- The Third Baku World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue dedicated to the theme "Sharing Culture for Shared Security" (May 18-19, 2015);
- The Fourth Baku World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue on the subject "Advancing Intercultural Dialogue: New Avenues for Human Security, Peace and Sustainable Development" (May 5–6, 2017);
- The Fifth Baku World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue on "Building dialogue into action against discrimination, inequality, and violent conflict" (May 2–3, 2019);
- The Sixth Baku World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue on "Dialogue for Peace and Global Security: Cooperation and Interconnectivity" (May 1-3, 2024).

## 2.5.2 DIVERSITY EDUCATION

According to the [\*Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan \(No.00 of November 12, 1995\)\*](#), the state assists in developing education, supervises the education system, and establishes minimum educational standards. The state education system in the Republic of Azerbaijan is secular. Every citizen has the right to education, and the state ensures the right to free, compulsory, general secondary education. The state ensures that talented individuals can

pursue their education regardless of their financial circumstances. Everyone has the right to be raised and educated in the language of their choice. The state guarantees everyone the equality of rights and freedoms, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, language, sex, origin, property status, service position, beliefs, membership in political parties, trade unions and other public associations. It is prohibited to restrict the rights and freedoms of individuals based on race, ethnicity, religion, language, sex, origin, beliefs, or political or social affiliation.

By the [\*Law On Education \(No.833-IIIQ of June 19, 2009\)\*](#) the state ensures the creation of appropriate conditions for every citizen to receive education and does not allow the deprivation of any stage, level, or form of education; guarantees the opportunity to receive education for every citizen and the non-discrimination of all citizens, regardless of gender, race, language, religion, political beliefs, ethnic affiliation, social status, origin, or health conditions; irrespective of the form of ownership, ensures equal opportunities for men and women in recruitment, appointment or selection to positions, labour incentives, admission to educational institutions, provision of scholarships to students, selection of specialities, assessment of the knowledge, employment of graduates, a continuation of education at the next level, improvement of qualifications, and other issues in the field of education; ensures that talented individuals continue their education, regardless of their financial situation, and creates conditions for those needing social protection to receive education.

The language of instruction in the Republic of Azerbaijan's educational institutions is the state language, Azerbaijani. Taking into account the wishes of citizens and founders of educational institutions, following international treaties to which the Republic of Azerbaijan is a party or an agreement with a body determined by the relevant executive authority, education in educational institutions may be conducted in other languages based on corresponding state educational standards or internationally accredited educational programs. Educational institutions in languages other than Azerbaijani must teach the Azerbaijani language, literature, history, and geography; for students with limited knowledge of the language of instruction, preparatory classes and courses are organised according to the procedure determined by the relevant executive authority and educational programs.

Intercultural education is part of the secondary school and university curricula; shared national values and identity, promotion of tolerance, multilingualism, equality, world cultures, religions, traditions, etc., are delivered at all levels of education within humanitarian disciplines, the subject "Azerbaijani Multiculturalism" is included in the curricula of higher education institutions. Education is conducted in 4,086 schools in Azerbaijani, 16 schools in Russian, and six in Georgian. Education in 312 schools is Azerbaijani-Russian, in 9 schools is Azerbaijani-Russian-English, in 3 schools are Azerbaijani-Georgian, in 1 school is Azerbaijani-Russian-Georgian languages. 0.2% of students receive education in other languages (English, Turkish, French). English is taught as a foreign language in 3,745 schools, Russian in 3,090, French in 344, German in 233, Arabic in 16, and Persian in 8. Minority languages, such as Lezgi, Talysh, Hebrew, Avar, Sahur, Udin, Kurdish, and Khinalig, are taught in secondary schools in some areas of the country. For example, the Lezgi language is taught in 101 schools, the Talysh language in 252 schools, the Avar language in 19 schools, the Sahur language in 4 schools, the Udin language in 3 schools, and Kurdish, Khinalig, and Hebrew in 1 school each. In total, 29,942 students belonging to national minorities learn their native language in schools.

### 2.5.3 MEDIA PLURALISM AND CONTENT DIVERSITY

The legislative framework for media, media pluralism and content diversity is based on the [\*Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan \(No.00 of November 12, 1995\)\*](#), Article 50 (Freedom of information), which establishes that "Everyone is free to legally seek, receive, impart, produce, and disseminate any information. Freedom of mass information is guaranteed. State censorship in mass media, including the press, is prohibited. Everyone's right to refute or reply to information published in mass media, which may violate their rights or damage their interests, shall be guaranteed. [\*The Law on Media \(No.471-VIQ of December 30, 2021\)\*](#) establishes the organisational, legal, and economic foundations of media sector activities, as well as the general rules for obtaining, preparing, transmitting, producing, and broadcasting mass information. Laws [\*On Obtaining Information \(No.1024-IIQ of September 30, 2005\)\*](#), [\*On Freedom of Information \(No.505-IQ of June 19, 1998\)\*](#), [\*On Telecommunication \(No.927-IIQ of June 14, 2005\)\*](#), [\*On Public Television and Radio Broadcasting \(No.767-IIQ of September 28, 2004\)\*](#), [\*On Protection of Children from Harmful Information \(No.1310-VQ of October 30, 2018\)\*](#), [\*On Information, Informatization and Information Protection \(No.460-IQ of April 3, 1998\)\*](#) and [\*On Personal Data \(No.998-IIIQ of May 11, 2010\)\*](#) also must be mentioned in this line.

[\*Concept of State Support for the Development of Mass Media in the Republic of Azerbaijan \(No.2957 of 31 July 2008\)\*](#) defines the basic principles, forms, means and areas of state support for the development of mass media, as well as the conditions for allocating financial resources, following the requirements of civil society.

The country's media landscape comprises over 5,000 mass communication media outlets owned by various political and public organisations, private organisations, and individuals registered in Azerbaijan. The country publishes approximately 40 daily newspapers, over 200 weekly and monthly newspapers, and more than 80 scientific, practical, socio-political, socio-economic, children's, and women's, as well as entertainment magazines. Approximately 20 news agencies in Azerbaijan regularly and comprehensively disseminate information about events in the country and worldwide. About 100 newspapers and magazines are published in regions. Azerbaijan operates 11 nationwide, four satellite, 17 cable television, eight regional, and 12 radio stations. The transition to digital broadcasting in Azerbaijan was completed in 2014. More than 50 journalist organisations are registered in Azerbaijan. The number of independent commercial companies distributing printed media in the capital and regions exceeds 20.

The primary regulators of the country's media space are the following organisations:

- [\*The Media Development Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan\*](#) public legal entity was established by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, [\*"On Deepening Reforms in the Media Sector in the Republic of Azerbaijan" \(No.1249 of January 12, 2021\)\*](#), based on the State Support Fund for the Development of Mass Media under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan (has been operating since 2009).
- [\*The Audiovisual Council of the Republic of Azerbaijan\*](#), the body regulating the sphere of audiovisual media, was established following the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan [\*On the application of the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan No. 471-VIQ dated December 30, 2021 "On Media" and the regulation of several issues\*](#)



[\*arising therefrom \(Nº 1589 of February 8, 2022\)\*](#) as the legal successor of the National Television and Radio Council which operated since 2002.

- [The Press Council of Azerbaijan](#) is a self-regulatory body. It was created on March 15, 2003, during the First Conference of Azerbaijani journalists, in which 180 media organisations were present.

The opening ceremony of the [Public Television and Radio Broadcasting Company](#) took place on August 29, 2005. When preparing programs, the public broadcaster considers the political views of the society, religious beliefs, various currents of public opinion, and the equality of citizens of the country. In addition, public television programs aim to reflect national and spiritual values, national customs and traditions, and diversity of culture and art. Public Television operates following the laws of Azerbaijan and the fundamental principles of classical public broadcasting.

Azerbaijan Television and Radio Broadcasting Closed Joint-Stock Company established the [Medeniyyet Channel](#) on February 14, 2011. One of the primary objectives of this Culture channel is to convey the rich human values of Azerbaijani culture globally and promote the world's cultural treasures in the country, thereby shaping the artistic aesthetic taste of the young generation. Besides this unique arts and culture TV channel, other operating channels, depending on their broadcasting policy, also offer a variety of regular programme series with cultural and artistic content, ranging from popular pop shows to programmes on classical heritage.

The Ministry of Culture enhances media coverage of cultural policies by broadening the coverage of cultural projects and events implemented in Azerbaijan and abroad through the Ministry's official Internet information resources (website, social networks, etc.) and the media (television, news agencies, news sites, etc.). Various analyses and monitoring of the disseminated information are regularly conducted.

In this regard, it is also worth noting the successful projects of the Ministry of Culture being implemented on social networks, television and radio, such as "Culture is Known by You", "Journey to Cultural Heritage", "Voice of Art", "Cinema radio", "Culture wave", "Azerbaijani language", "Our cultural heritage", "Cultural poster", "Presentations of cultural figures", "Speaking culture", "Culture and us", "Creators and keepers of our cinema alive", "Secret of a museum", "Our heritage that sounds", "Live performance of stage works", etc.

#### 2.5.4 LANGUAGE

The foundations of the national state language policy are laid down in the relevant articles of the [Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan \(No.00 of November 12, 1995\)](#). The official language is Azerbaijani; the state guarantees the development of this language. At the same time, the state ensures the free use and development of other languages spoken by the population. Everyone has the right to use their native language, and no one may be deprived of this right.

The Republic of Azerbaijan has been a state party to the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities since June 26, 2000. Affirming its commitment to universal values and expressing its support for human rights and freedoms, the Republic of Azerbaijan declares that the ratification of the Framework Convention and the implementation of its

provisions exclude any actions that may undermine the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Republic of Azerbaijan, as well as its internal and external security.

Based on this, the protection of the rights and freedoms of national minorities and ethnic groups living in the Republic of Azerbaijan and support for developing their language and culture form the foundation of the state's policy concerning national minorities. The implementation of state policy on the preservation and development of the cultural, linguistic and religious identity of national minorities and ethnic groups is carried out in such areas as state support for the observance of national traditions and customs, complete freedom of religious rites and rituals, the preservation and use of places of worship; the free development of folk crafts, professional and amateur creativity, folk art; the preservation of historical and cultural monuments of all peoples, etc. The Department of National Minorities was established in 2012 in the Institute of Folklore of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences. The department's primary purpose is to collect, systematise, and conduct research on the folklore of minorities.

The state cultural policy pursued in the Republic of Azerbaijan through intercultural dialogue aims to foster mutual understanding and friendly relations among ethnic groups living in the country. Any form of discrimination and xenophobia, including ethnic, national, racial, etc., are considered unacceptable. For these purposes, the Ministry of Culture carries out comprehensive work on preserving and developing the cultural values of ethnic minorities living in the country, which envisages cooperation with cultural centres and societies currently representing ethnic groups, provision of relevant amateur groups with folklore clothing, musical instruments and technical means; organisation of exhibitions reflecting the ethnography, art and customs of ethnic groups living in the country; tours of folk groups of national minorities in the country and abroad; creation conditions for active participation of groups representing national minorities not only in republic-wide cultural events; holding anniversaries of prominent representatives of culture and art of different ethnic groups; awarding honorary titles and monetary rewards to the leaders and participants of amateur art groups; etc.

#### 2.5.5 GENDER

The Republic of Azerbaijan [ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 1995](#) and signed its optional protocol in 2000. The [Family Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan \(No.781-IQ of 28 December 1999\)](#) outlines the principles governing establishing and strengthening family relations, their termination, the rights and responsibilities of family members, and the duties of state bodies in this area. The purpose of the Law [On guarantees of gender equality \(men and women\) \(No.150-IIIQ of October 10, 2006\)](#) is to ensure gender equality by eliminating all forms of discrimination based on gender, creating equal opportunities for men and women in the political, economic, social, cultural and other spheres of public life. The Law [On the Prevention of Domestic Violence \(No.1058-IIIQ of June 22, 2010\)](#) focuses on domestic violence between close relatives to mitigate its adverse legal, medical and social outcomes and provide legal and social assistance for victims.

The State Committee on Women's Issues of the Republic of Azerbaijan was established by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan's decree on January 14, 1998. The need for a comprehensive solution to the problems of family, children, and women's issues led to the

establishment of a unified state body - the [State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs](#) established by the [Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan No.361 on February 6, 2006](#).

[The Committee on Family, Women, and Children of the Milli Majlis](#) prepares bills or provides opinions on submitted bills concerning family relations, including guardianship and trusteeship, the protection and implementation of women and children's rights, ensuring gender equality for both males and females and the prevention of domestic violence.

According to the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Population, in the Republic of Azerbaijan, approximately 500,000 women work in the public and 350,000 in the private sectors. Equal conditions and opportunities in labour activity are applied to women and men. Gender equality requires raising awareness; therefore, over the past two years, educational work has been conducted with 700 employers across 14 regions of the country. On the agenda is the issue of providing certain tax breaks to companies that appoint women to leadership positions.

Regarding gender equality in employment in Azerbaijan, women have traditionally held a predominance in culture and education. For example, out of 38,172 employees working in public cultural institutions of the Ministry of Culture in 2024, 27,171 were women (71.18%), and only 11,001 were men (28.82%). Most employees in libraries, museums, archives, music schools, and theatres are women who actively manage cultural institutions. The representation of women in key decision-making positions within cultural institutions and in essential cultural policymaking roles is also very high. For example, 65 women work in the Ministry of Culture's Office, and 18 occupy management positions. In comparison, 63 men are employed in the Ministry of Culture's Office, and 21 hold management positions. The State Service for the Protection, Development, and Restoration of Cultural Heritage, under the Ministry of Culture, employs a majority of men, with 83 women, four of whom occupy management positions, and 146 men, 12 of whom hold managerial roles. However, in this instance, we must recognise that working with immovable heritage entails considerable "fieldwork."

#### 2.5.6 DISABILITY

The Republic of Azerbaijan has joined the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities with [Law No.686-IIIQ of October 2, 2008](#). Article 16 ("Ensuring access to cultural and sports facilities for persons with disabilities") of the [Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(No.1153-VQ of May 31, 2018\)](#) obliges relevant executive authorities to ensure that cultural institutions and sports facilities are accessible to persons with disabilities. According to Article 14 of the [Law on Culture \(No.506-IVQ of 21 December 2012\)](#), which pertains to the right to use cultural institutions and cultural values, persons with disabilities are entitled to preferential access to cultural values.

Public organisations for the disabled and children with disabilities are exempt from paying rent for buildings used for cultural clubs, houses of culture, and libraries.

According to the State Statistics Committee, as of the beginning of 2023, the total number of persons with disabilities receiving pensions or benefits was 488,774, of which 46,654 were children under 18 years old with limited health.



The *Comprehensive Program on the Problems of the Disabled in the Republic of Azerbaijan (No.185 of May 10, 1994)* has been assigned to provide relevant jobs in various clubs and cultural centres for visually impaired or children with disabilities of groups I and II with special music education; to organise departments for blind readers at the central libraries in the cities; to strengthen the offices of the Azerbaijan Deaf Society in the relevant houses of culture; to hold regular holidays, concerts and performances, and other activities for children with disabilities; to provide free access to all museums for members of communities with disabilities, et cetera.

To ensure the cultural rights of persons with disabilities, wheelchairs and lifts have been installed in the Heydar Aliyev Palace, the Azerbaijan State Academic National Drama Theatre, the Azerbaijan State Puppet Theatre, the Azerbaijan State Russian Drama Theatre, the Azerbaijan State Theatre for Young Spectators, and many other major cultural institutions.

In 2016, the Azerbaijan National Library developed a methodological manual entitled "Organization of Library Services for People with Disabilities" to ensure equal access to cultural life for people with disabilities.

[The Republican Library for the Visually Impaired](#) annually copies new books included in the library's fund in the recording studio. It makes them available to visually impaired readers living in the country's regions. In addition, the library has been equipped with modern technical equipment; all computers have been loaded with a program called "Jaws" for the visually impaired. At the same time, the library organises training courses for the middle and older generation of readers in the new Latin script, Braille.

## **2.6 Culture and social inclusion**

Social integration and cohesion are among the key issues in the Republic of Azerbaijan's current cultural policy. A generally accepted approach is that when developing policies or programs by national, regional, or local authorities, the cultural factor is also considered for social integration and population cohesion. In particular, in the action plans of state programs to support specific groups (such as refugees, disadvantaged groups, the elderly, and the unemployed), there is always a place for many measures to involve them in a full-fledged cultural life.

A similar approach was reflected and realised in such government programs as the [State Program on Solving the Problems of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons \(No.895 of September 17, 1998\)](#), the ["State Program on Improving Living Conditions and Increasing Employment of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons" \(No.298 of July 1, 2004\)](#), the [State Program on Strengthening Social Protection of Elderly Citizens \(No.1413 of April 17, 2006\)](#), the [National Action Plan for the Protection of Human Rights in the Republic of Azerbaijan \(No.1880 of December 28, 2006\)](#), the ["National Action Program to increase the effectiveness of the protection of human rights and freedoms in the Republic of Azerbaijan" \(No.1938 of December 27, 2011\)](#) and in many other state programs and projects.

Activities in the field of culture are also reflected in state programs dedicated to preventing possible negative factors and dangerous phenomena. For instance, among the activities prescribed by the [State Program on Combating Illicit Trafficking in Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and Their Precursors and Drug Addiction for 2019-2024 \(No.1334 of](#)

[July 22, 2019](#)), there are “Organization of intellectual competitions against illicit trafficking in drugs, psychotropic substances and their precursors to form an anti-drug worldview of pupils and students”; “Theatrical performances, feature, documentary and animated films on the promotion of a healthy lifestyle and the harms of drug addiction”; “Activities serving to organise leisure time of teenagers and youth in cities and regions”.

The [National Action Plan on Combating Human Trafficking in the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2020-2024 \(No. 2173 of July 22, 2020\)](#) envisages “Taking appropriate measures in the administrative, educational, social, cultural and other areas to create an environment of public intolerance in society regarding the circumstances that create conditions for the commission of human trafficking and forced labour crimes; involving civil society institutions and media entities in this work”; “Strengthening advocacy and awareness-raising in the fight against human trafficking, making various social advertisements, videos, and short films; preparing and showing programs, preparing multiple educational materials, posting on Internet information resources and promoting their use”; “Applying the practice of evaluating the results of all awareness-raising activities and training on human trafficking by organisers and participants”.

## **2.7 Societal impacts of arts**

National culture plays a significant role in the collective consciousness of Azerbaijani society, and the cultural heritage and achievements of arts and literature organically fit into its mentality, axiological attitudes, and everyday behaviour. In this context, the primary purpose of cultural policy in Azerbaijan is to harmonise relations between culture, artists, the public, and the state. It means building relationships where culture develops based on internal needs, creative individuals realise their potential, the audience receives aesthetic inspiration, and the state provides the necessary support. At the same time, society does not merely play the role of a consumer of culture and art; on the contrary, as feedback, it actively shapes the cultural agenda using the examples of created masterpieces.

The traditional significant societal impact of culture and art ultimately finds its expression in decisions taken by the state. The established practice is that when developing various types of state programs, strategies, and action plans, relevant events in the field of culture are often included that contribute to the implementation of these state programs. As examples, the [State Program of Socio-Economic Development of the Regions of the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2019-2023 \(No.500 of January 29, 2019\)](#) and the [Socio-Economic Development Strategy of the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2022-2026 \(No.3378 of July 22, 2022\)](#) can be cited.

Moreover, the legislation ensures the active participation of the public in these processes: according to the Law [On Public Participation \(№ 816-IVQ of November 22, 2013\)](#), state bodies must provide the participation of citizens and civil society institutions in the preparation and implementation of state policy in various spheres of state and public life, including cultural one, and consider public opinion. These procedures also apply in decision-making at the national and local levels in organising public control over the activities of relevant government agencies responsible for culture. Private and civil society actors, individual figures, and researchers in culture actively utilise this consultative right, and their opinions and proposals are considered in various state programs, including cultural and artistic activities and projects. Forms of public participation include public councils, public discussions, public hearings, public

opinion surveys, public consultations on draft legal acts, and written submissions. Thus, the Public Council under the Ministry of Culture is committed to facilitating the participation of civil society institutions in the adoption of legislative acts concerning the Ministry of Culture and organising public oversight of its activities.

The societal impact of culture is considered in the *draft "Azerbaijani Culture - 2040" Concept of the Republic of Azerbaijan*; one of the priorities is the culture of behaviour. The proposed policy in the field of the culture of behaviour envisages increasing the role and socio-political influence of culture in the behavioural algorithms of individuals, development and promotion of effective models of verbal and non-verbal communication within society and at the level of various state and social institutions, implementation of coordinated interdepartmental activities and projects to strengthen the reputation of the family institution as the primary bearer of national and spiritual values, ensuring the application of etiquette related to individual types of the culture of behaviour, such as contact with the environment, family and household behaviour, public behaviour, communication, aesthetic tastes, etc.

See also chapter 1.2.5

## **2.8 Cultural sustainability**

Approved by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan No.273 of February 14, 2014, the [\*Concept of Culture of the Republic of Azerbaijan\*](#) reflects the understanding formed in the national cultural policy that cultural creativity and heritage require external support mechanisms from outside the cultural sector to ensure their sustainability and full development. Furthermore, there is a clear understanding that culture does not exist alone, in isolation, but as a social phenomenon. Consequently, culture actively engages with various aspects of societal life, including politics, law, economics and finance, science and education, human capital, international relations, and more. It leads to a state approach designed to foster a harmonious and mutually beneficial interaction between culture and all other facets of societal life, ensuring cultural sustainability that, in turn, supports the sustainability of society.

The national cultural policy considers not only issues of the development of culture itself, namely, issues directly related to the preservation of immovable monuments of history and culture, movable cultural values, intangible cultural heritage, support for theatres, musical creativity and visual arts, the development of cinematography and publishing, museums, libraries, cultural centres and so on. In addition to the above, considerable attention is devoted to the mechanisms for implementing cultural policy, including legislative, administrative, financial, and information support, staffing, infrastructure, and international cooperation. All these cultural policy areas are permanently analysed, appropriate recommendations are provided, and practical development paths are indicated. Thus, the foundations are laid for a sustainable approach to solving practical issues of national cultural policy. In the field of culture, all subsequent state programs, action plans, strategies, and roadmaps, as well as legislative initiatives, financial policies, personnel approaches, and so on, proceed in this manner. In this regard, systematic work has been undertaken throughout 2023-2024 to implement 287 tasks assigned to the Ministry of Culture through 11 state programs, five strategies, five national action plans, four action plans, 23 decrees, and 48 orders approved by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The draft *"Azerbaijani Culture - 2040" Concept of the Republic of Azerbaijan* proposes developing a "Culture for All" cultural model consisting of culture being an integral part of everyone's lifestyle, ensuring the functionality of culture, the organic interaction of culture with science, education and innovations, broad access to culture, preventing monopolisation of creativity, preserving the cultural diversity and cultural unity of Azerbaijani society, preserving live communication in an environment of rapid digitalisation, preserving national identity and national-spiritual values in the context of globalisation, expanding the participation of Azerbaijani culture in international cultural exchange.

## **2.9 Other main cultural policy issues**

The destruction of Azerbaijani historical and cultural heritage in the territory of the modern Republic of Armenia is causing serious concern within society. In this context, Azerbaijan's non-governmental organisations, including the "Simurg" Azerbaijan Cultural Association, the Western Azerbaijan Community, the "Miras" Public Association for the Promotion of Cultural Heritage, the "Promotion of Iravan Cultural Heritage" Public Union, the "Zangezur" Societies Public Union, the "Objective" Public Union for the Promotion of National Values, the Association for the Protection of Azerbaijan's Cultural Heritage and Support for Tourism, the Public Association "Organisation for the Protection of Historical and Cultural Monuments in the Liberated Territories of Azerbaijan", the Public Association for Assistance in the Study of Cultural Heritage "Miras", the Forum of National Non-Governmental Organisations of Azerbaijan, the National Council of Youth Organisations of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Public Association "Cultural Development Centre", and the Public Association "Association of National Culinary Arts of Azerbaijan", among others, have repeatedly sent collective open letters to the UNESCO Director-General, with copies forwarded to the President of the UN Human Rights Council and the UN Special Rapporteur on cultural rights. In their appeals, representatives of Azerbaijani civil society expressed concern regarding the systematic policy aimed at the deliberate destruction of cultural values and the erasure of the historical and cultural roots of Azerbaijani heritage in Armenia. These actions have resulted in the intentional destruction of both tangible and intangible Azerbaijani cultural heritage, erasing the lasting traces of the Azerbaijani people who inhabited these territories for centuries.

Non-governmental organisations have urgently reported that Azerbaijani cultural heritage in Western Zangezur, Gafan, Iravan, Goycha, Nuvadi, Vedi, and other areas has been intentionally destroyed and misappropriated. Among the numerous examples, the Damirbulag Mosque in Iravan was bulldozed in the early 1990s, and the sixteenth-century Sardar Mosque was demolished in several stages. The Gala Mosque, Shah Abbas Mosque, Tapabashi Mosque, Zal Khan Mosque, Sartib Khan Mosque, Haji Novruzali Bey Mosque, Haji Jafar Bey Mosque, Rajab Pasha Mosque, Mohammad Sartib Khan Mosque, Haji Inam Mosque, along with more than 300 other religious and cultural heritage sites in Armenia, have encountered the same fate. Furthermore, over 500 Azerbaijani cemeteries in Armenia, such as Aghadada, Ashaghi Shorja, Gullubulagh, and Saral, have been desecrated and destroyed. The tomb of the renowned Azerbaijani poet Ashig Alasgar, a significant figure representing Azerbaijan's intangible cultural heritage, was also demolished. This widespread campaign extends beyond physical destruction, as the historical names of Azerbaijani villages have been completely altered, with ancient toponyms supplanted by Armenian ones.

Azerbaijani civil society representatives emphasized in open letters their firm belief that UNESCO's involvement is urgently needed to halt the systematic policy of one of its member states, which aims to intentionally destroy cultural property and deny the historical and cultural roots of heritage belonging to the Azerbaijani people. They expressed their expectation of a principled and consistent approach from the Organisation to defend the principles and values it upholds. In light of the above, the representatives of Azerbaijani NGOs several times requested that UNESCO send a fact-finding mission to Armenia to monitor and document the state of Azerbaijani cultural heritage there and to demand that Armenia comply with its international obligations to protect Azerbaijani cultural heritage, as stipulated in various international conventions, particularly those of UNESCO.

### 3. Cultural and creative sectors

#### 3.1 *Heritage*

Cultural heritage protection is based on UNESCO's relevant conventions, recommendations, and classifications, which include immovable, movable, and intangible heritage. Immovable cultural heritage in the Republic of Azerbaijan is primarily under the jurisdiction of the State Service for the Protection, Development, and Restoration of Cultural Heritage within the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Azerbaijan and partially under the jurisdiction of other state bodies. Thus, 4,326 (70.34%) of the 6,150 registered historical and cultural monuments are under the jurisdiction of the State Service, 732 (11.9%) monuments are under the jurisdiction of the Administration of State Historical-Architectural Reserve "Icherisheher", 210 (3.41%) monuments - the Reserves Management Centre under the State Tourism Agency, 196 (3.19%) - the Shusha City State Reserve Department, and another 686 (11.16%) registered monuments are under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Culture of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic. The number of newly discovered monuments under the protection of the State Service of the Ministry of Culture is 1802, of which 402 were found in the liberated territories and 1400 in other regions of the country. Thus, the total number of immovable monuments, registered and newly discovered, is 7952.

In addition, there are 29 historical, cultural, architectural, artistic and ethnographic reserves in the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan: 13 reserves are under the jurisdiction of the State Service of the Ministry of Culture, nine under the Tourism Agency, two under the Administration of State Historical-Architectural Reserve "Ichersheher", one under the jurisdiction of the Shusha City State Reserve Department and four historical and cultural reserves of the Ministry of Culture of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Among the main directions of activity of the State Service for Protection, Development and Restoration of Cultural Heritage under the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Azerbaijan for the last years are:

- Monitoring the current condition of historical monuments;
- Inventory work in the liberated territories;
- Updating the register of monuments, preparing passports and protection zones;
- Restoration and conservation of monuments;
- Improving cultural heritage protection;
- Activities of historical and cultural reserves;
- International cooperation.

On December 18-19, 2023, the Cultural Heritage Forum was held in our country for the first time, organised by the Heydar Aliyev Foundation and the Ministry of Culture. The forum, which included extensive discussions with the participation of well-known historians, archaeologists, artists, architects, sculptors, artisans, and other specialists in the field, discussed the preservation, development, and promotion of national heritage, the current situation, state support for tangible and intangible heritage, fine and applied arts, historical monuments, and other areas. Panels were organised at the forum on the topics of "Problems of research and protection of immovable history - cultural heritage of Azerbaijan", "Issues of protection of the



historical-cultural and natural heritage of Azerbaijan in the post-conflict period”, “Movable cultural heritage in Azerbaijan: museum work and modern challenges”, “Protection of intangible cultural heritage and modern challenges”, “Fine arts and modern challenges”, “Cultural heritage and contemporary architecture - Principles of urban planning”.

Special attention is paid to preserving, restoring and supporting Azerbaijan's intangible cultural heritage: local lore (customs and traditions, ceremonies and festivities, symbols and mysteries), national folklore (music and dances, verbal literature traditions, games and performances), and artisanship (traditional applied, visual and decorative arts). The "State Register of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Azerbaijan" (<https://intangible.az/front/az/contests>) comprises a list of over 5,000 intangible cultural heritage items, a database of more than 850 intangible cultural heritage samples, and information on 180 intangible cultural heritage bearers, as well as 68 institutions and organisations. The Ministry of Culture established the State Register in collaboration with the Institutes of Folklore, Archaeology and Ethnography, Architecture and Art of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences, relevant public associations and non-governmental organisations, and individual researchers.

### **3.2 Archives and libraries**

The [\*Law on the National Archive Fund \(No.694-IQ of June 22, 1999\)\*](#) regulates the formation, protection, use, and operation of the National Archive Fund in the Republic of Azerbaijan. Today, the archive system of the Republic includes six state archives of national importance (the State Archive, the State Historical Archive, the State Archive of Literature and Art, the Archive of State Scientific and Technical Documents, the State Cinema-Photo Documents Archives, and the State Sound Record Archive), 15 branches of the State Archive, 50 districts and City Archives, as well as the State Archive of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic (with seven districts and city archives), subordinated to [the National Archives Department of the Republic of Azerbaijan](#).

The National Archive Fund provides public services on the inclusion and preservation of documents in the National Archive Fund, issuance of archival references or extracts from archival documents to citizens, issuance of copies of archival documents or extracts from archival documents to administrations, organisations and enterprises, and issuance of permission to use archival documents for scientific research and other purposes. Electronic Services are provided through the Electronic Services Portal, Electronic Archive System, Electronic Archive Information System, and Electronic Reporting System.

[\*The State Program on the Development of Archival Work in the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2020-2025 \(No.1815 of February 12, 2020\)\*](#) aimed to ensure reliable protection and widespread use of archival documents, to modernise archival service organisations, and to implement modern information and communication technologies, among other objectives.

The country's public library system primarily consists of a vast network of public libraries managed by the Ministry of Culture. In addition, the State Oil Company (1), the Confederation of Trade Unions (3), and other organisations (29) also own some of the libraries.

The Azerbaijan National Library, the Republican Youth Library, named after J.Jabbarli, the Republican Children's Library, named after F.Kocharli, and the Republican Library for the

Visually Impaired, as well as City (district) Centralized Library Systems (CLS), operate under the Ministry of Culture.

The 75 City (district) Centralized Library Systems of the Ministry of Culture, comprising 7,304 employees, consist of 2,526 libraries, including 75 central libraries, 211 city library branches, 141 settlement library branches, and 2,099 village library branches, with a total library fund of 19,569,270 copies. Currently, 2,081,403 readers use the book collection of the CLS.

KOHA, an open-source integrated library system used worldwide in more than 70 countries by public, school, and special libraries, as well as in some extensive academic libraries, has been implemented to digitise library and bibliographic processes in the country. The bibliographic information of more than 850,000 books has been entered into the system, which is expected to be made available to the public soon.

A book collection campaign, "Go to Karabakh with a Book", is being held for libraries whose activities will be restored in liberated territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan at the joint initiative of the Ministry of Culture and the Azerbaijan National Library. There are currently 130,446 copies of books in the project fund collected at the National Library.

The project "Return of our National Moral Values to the Motherland", implemented by the National Library with the support of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation and coordination of the Ministry of Culture, implemented to bring electronic versions of manuscripts of Azerbaijani literature classics stored in world libraries and museums to Azerbaijan, create a single electronic database, print one copy of each of them for including in the Rare Books Fund of the National Library. Between 2023 and 2024, copies of more than 270 manuscripts from 23 countries were brought to Azerbaijan as part of the project.

### **3.3 Performing arts**

The national cultural policy supports professional and amateur collectives and institutions in the performing arts, including theatre, dance, and music. The state order for the creation of new works of high artistic value in various genres of theatrical art and ensuring their stage embodiment is widely and effectively implemented; the stimulation of the preparation of performances in theatres, the holding of republican and international theatre festivals and competitions, ensuring the participation of theatre groups in these events are implemented; etc.

There are 29 professional theatres in the country, including one opera and ballet theatre, 19 drama, musical comedy, and musical drama theatres, and nine children's and youth theatres. These professional theatres include the Azerbaijan State Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre, the Azerbaijan State Academic National Drama Theatre, the Azerbaijan State Academic Musical Theatre, the Azerbaijan State Academic Russian Drama Theatre, the Azerbaijan State Theatre of Young Spectators, the Azerbaijan State Puppet Theatre, and the Azerbaijan State Pantomime Theatre, among others.

The "Expert Council on the Evaluation of the Content of the Annual Repertoires of Theatre and Performance Institutions and Performances Prepared based on State Order" comprised theatre critics, musicologists, artists, playwrights, psychologists and sociologists, was established under the Ministry of Culture at 28.12.2023, to ensure transparency in theatre and performance institutions, as well as to support the creative process, to prepare



performances that are distinguished by their artistic and aesthetic value, reflect national and spiritual values, meet the requirements of the time, and to ensure the evaluation of the repertoires proposed by the theatrical institutions.

A National Theatre Forum was held on April 11-12, 2023, under the theme "Azerbaijani Theatre - 150: Development Prospects," jointly organised by the Ministry of Culture and the Heydar Aliyev Centre, with the participation of the Azerbaijan State University of Culture and Arts. Actors, directors, managers, technical staff representatives, critics, and other theatre figures came together at the forum. They participated in productive, perspective-based and goal-oriented panel discussions on various topics such as "Traditions and Trends in Azerbaijani Theatre", "Modern Actor's School at the National Theatre: A Systematic Approach in the Renewal Process", "Concept and Strategic Goals", "Development of Human Capital in the Theatre Field".

Among the interesting motivational projects implemented in 2023-2024 is the "Baku Premieres of Regional Theatres" project. It was implemented to revitalise the theatre process in the regions, support cooperation, facilitate creative exchange, and stimulate the activities of young directors. As part of the project, performances by regional state drama theatres (Lankaran, Sumgayit, Sheki, Fuzuli, Aghdam, Gazakh, Gusar, Gakh, Mingachevir, and Ganja) were organised on the stage of the Azerbaijan State Academic National Drama Theatre in 2024.

Within the framework of the project "Theatre Pedagogy for Schoolchildren," implemented jointly by the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Education and Science in the second half of 2024, more than 10,000 schoolchildren had the opportunity to watch performances on various topics in state theatres operating in the regions under the Ministry of Culture.

Another interesting motivational initiative is the Ministry of Culture's project "I Learn by Teaching", within which prominent theatre figures hold master classes for professional and young actors of regional state theatres and amateur groups of folk theatres.

### **3.4 Visual arts and crafts**

Policies promoting the visual arts and crafts sectors are part of the Republic of Azerbaijan's national cultural policy, which boosts artistic creativity and promotes creative works nationally and internationally. Supporting interesting projects in various types of fine and decorative-applied arts; holding national and international symposiums, festivals, and competitions on fine and decorative-applied arts; ensuring the participation of specialists and artists in international projects and competitions; supporting the formation of art collections, preparation of programs for exhibitions and educational activities of galleries; enrichment of collections of local galleries with masterpieces of art and application of modern technologies in their activities; publication of books, films, booklets, catalogues and databases websites dedicated to visual and decorative-applied arts of Azerbaijan, and stimulation of the creativity of talented young people are integral parts of this policy. A significant measure of state support was the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan [\*On the transfer of individual creative workshops used by Azerbaijan Artists' Union members to their ownership \(No.1251 of June 19, 2003\)\*](#).

The [Azerbaijan State Art Gallery](#), as well as 34 state regional art galleries, currently operate within the Ministry of Culture system in the sphere of fine arts (graphics, sculpture, painting,

and partly architecture) and decorative-applied arts (carpet weaving, jewellery, copper-smithing, armaments, pottery, etc.).

In this field, private galleries, the Azerbaijan Artists' Union, and its regional branches in Ganja, Nakhchivan, Sheki, Lankaran, as well as other public associations, also operate. Numerous events and exhibitions are held to support the development of digital and contemporary art.

[YARAT Contemporary Art Space](#) (founded in 2011), a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to nurturing an understanding of modern art and creating a hub for artistic practice, research and thinking in the Caucasus, Central Asia and the surrounding region, implements its mission through an ongoing program of exhibitions, education events and festivals, facilitating exchange between local and international artistic networks including foundations, galleries and museums.

The country has an extensive museum network, primarily under the Ministry of Culture, which encompasses historical and local lore, as well as scientific, art, and literary collections. Additionally, the network includes patriotic and house museums that promote the country's visual arts and crafts sector. The leading public museums in the country include [the National Museum of History of Azerbaijan](#), [the Azerbaijan National Museum of Art](#), [the Azerbaijan National Carpet Museum](#), [the Azerbaijan State J.Jabbarli Theatre Museum](#), [the State Museum of Azerbaijani Musical Culture](#), and [the Museum of Azerbaijani Independence](#).

[The Baku Museum of Modern Art](#), the largest private museum established in 2009, collects the finest works of the Azerbaijani avant-garde, encompassing paintings and sculptures from the mid-twentieth century to the present.

Statutory goals of the ["Azerkhalcha" Open Joint Stock Company](#) are the production and export of carpets and carpet products, the organisation of their sale within the country and abroad, the application of new technologies in the production of carpets and carpet products, the modernisation of the material and technical base and its efficient use, and the implementation of other works related to the development of this field.

Realisation of the [State Program for the Protection and Development of Carpet Art in the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2018-2022 \(No.3722 of February 28, 2018\)](#) has played a significant role in the protection and promotion of material and cultural heritage in the field of carpet weaving; implementation of measures to increase the competitiveness of carpet weaving and protect the domestic market; strengthening the export potential of carpet weaving; strengthening the human resource potential in all areas of carpet weaving; coordinating and expanding theoretical and practical scientific research in the field of carpet studies, and strengthening the material and technical base.

### **3.5 Cultural arts and creative industries**

#### **3.5.1 GENERAL DEVELOPMENTS**

The development of cultural and creative industries (CCI) as a field of activity providing the production of cultural products and implementing cultural services is envisaged as one of the main directions of state cultural policy. The Ministry of Culture has taken various measures and drafted several plans to develop CCIs. Research on the role of the CCI sector in the world economy, the local situation in the Azerbaijani context, the contribution of CCIs to the

Azerbaijani economy, shortcomings in this area, and public-private investigations into partnerships and partnership gaps were conducted.

The Culture and Creative Industries Forum, organised by the Ministry of Culture from 28th to 30th November 2023, attracted up to 500 participants. The forum was aimed to discuss the prospects for cooperation and existing issues among players in the CCI ecosystem and explore opportunities for the comprehensive development of the creative industries. The programme featured seven-panel sessions and three round tables covering various clusters of cultural and creative sectors, including art, design, cinema, and audio-visual fields, as well as topics on international cooperation, export prospects, and state policy in this area. Both local and international speakers participated in the discussions.

Activity direction "Ensuring the dynamic development of Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI) and strengthening the export potential in this field" of the Action Plan of the [\*Socio-Economic Development Strategy of the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2022-2026 \(No.3378 of July 22, 2022\)\*](#) envisages creation of a modern legal and regulatory infrastructure for the development of CCI, including the formation of regulatory and legal, statistical bases, intellectual property, as well as management mechanisms; support for the formation of CCI as an industry and the activities of market participants, including the improvement of the production base and promotion of sectoral clustering; creation of certificate programs and a special scholarship program for study abroad following the requirements of modern and competitive CCI fields; and creation of incentive mechanisms aimed at expanding export opportunities for CCI.

The second activity area of the Action Plan, named "Promoting the development of a cultural and creative society", envisages the implementation of educational initiatives that promote the development of skills in the cultural and creative fields; establishment and operation of media platforms in the cultural and creative field; and supporting the development of creative fields within the framework of promoting Azerbaijani culture.

Since the commencement of the Strategy implementation:

- A special Scholarship Programme for Cultural and Creative Industries ([mystart.az](http://mystart.az)) has been established. Financial support has been granted to 20 individuals for their education abroad.
- Within the framework of the Grant Programme, financial support was provided for the implementation of projects proposed by four nongovernmental organisations in 2023 and twenty-nine NGOs in 2024.
- "Creative Week", "Cultural and Creative Industries Forum", and "Cultural and Creative Industries Exhibition" (MY EXPO) were established. Two Creative Weeks and one Digital Creative Weekend took place.
- At the awards ceremony during the 11th India International Film Tourism Conclave (IFTC) in Mumbai, Azerbaijan was recognised as the most popular filming destination of the year for Indian directors and producers.
- Support was provided to produce several audio-visual products in the country based on orders from Indian, Serbian, Pakistani, and Russian companies. Approximately 10 million US dollars of funds entered the country's economy through film commission services in 2023-2024.

- The Global Innovation Index 2024 report assessed the country on the sub-indicator "7.2.3. Entertainment and Media Market," Azerbaijan ranked 47th among 133 countries.
- The "AI4Art" and other short-term education and training programs, as well as the "Cultech", "Gametech", and "Music" incubation programs, were implemented, and 444 people were certified.
- Forty start-ups and 10+ new educational programs have been implemented.

The number of CCI subjects increased significantly by the end of 2024 compared to 2022. Thus, the total number of business entities under CCI rose from 21,022 to 22,852 units, and the number of enterprises engaged in CCI rose from 5,886 to 6,826 units.

Joint events on export promotion and the formation of the Eastern Pan-Regional Market in the field of CCI were held:

- 1st Humour Festival of the Turkic World (2023);
- National final of innovative start-ups in collaboration with A-Hub-ICESCO (2023);
- ATA festival -1st International Festival of Turkic World Animation (2024);
- World final of innovative start-ups together with ICESCO A-Hub (2024);
- G-Hub Summit on Gaming Technologies (2024);
- Audio-visual market of Eastern countries "OMarket" (2024).

### 3.5.2 BOOKS AND PRESS

Support of the book and press industry is one of the priorities of the state cultural policy in the Republic of Azerbaijan. It is sufficient to note that, following the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan [\*On the implementation of mass publications in the Azerbaijani language with Latin script \(No.56 of January 12, 2004\)\*](#), more than 10 million books have been published in the country. The Law [\*On Publishing \(No.887-IQ of May 30, 2000\)\*](#) and other legislative acts supporting the publishing industry are in force in the country. An essential measure in this direction was the *Decision of the Cabinet of Ministers* [\*On approval of the "List of mass media products and books \(except e-books\), as well as textbook sets and paper in rolls or sheets related to the production \(publication\) of these goods \(products\), the import and sale of which is exempt from value-added tax \(No.184 of May 13, 2022\)\*](#).

About 70 publishing and printing enterprises operate in Azerbaijan, and among them are "Azernashr", "Qanun", "Tehsil", "TEAS Press", "Hadaif Nashrleri", "Sharq-Garb", "Elm", "Altun Kitab", "Qelem", "Alatoran Yayınları", "Parlaq imzalar", "Khan", "Qedim Qala", "Chashioğlu", "Aghilli bala", "Chapar", "Mayak", "Mimta", "Mujru", "Elm ve Tehsil", "Letterpress", "Everest", "Libra Kitab", "Strauss Press", "Ting", "Maxoffset" and others. In 2023, 4,697 titles and 4,435,800 copies of books were published across the country (for comparison, in 2019, 3,697 titles and 3,435,800 copies of books were published). Data for 2023 includes 1,355 titles of scientific literature, 1,033 titles of educational literature, 1,866 titles of fiction, 443 titles of children's literature, and other publications.

The role of the book trade in developing the book business in Azerbaijan is undeniable. Approximately 40 enterprises, including big book trade companies, operate in the country. Among them are Ali and Nino, Libraff, Baku Book Centre, KitabevimAz, Bookzone Group, Kitabchi, and others.

The Ministry of Culture holds an annual Publication Purchase Competition to enrich public library funds, in which publishers, authors, and bookstores participate; this work has been carried out especially actively in recent years. Thus, from 2023 to 2024, 90,203 copies of 1,118 books were purchased for a total value of 927,622 manats, which is comparable to the total similar data for 2011-2022: 104,747 copies of 1,868 names with a value of 953,522 manats.

Regular book fairs are another serious government support mechanism for the book industry. Organized regularly for 15 years by the Ministry of Culture, the [Baku Book Fair](#) has proven to be a reliable platform for engaging with consumers, increasing brand awareness, sharing local and international experiences, and generating ideas for developing the book business in the digital age. In this regard, the statistical indices of the 10th Baku International Book Fair (October 2-8, 2024), dedicated to the 530th anniversary of the great 16th-century Azerbaijani poet Muhammad Fuzuli, are worth considering: 18 participating countries, 112 local participating organisations, 55 foreign participating organisations, 173 local authors, 24 foreign authors, 327 events, and over 55 thousand visitors.

The Ministry of Culture also actively participates in international book fairs to promote Azerbaijani books, publishers, authors, and the entire national book industry. For instance, in 2024, the Ministry of Culture ensured the participation of 19 publishing houses and 22 authors at international book fairs in Cairo, London, Doha, Rabat, Beijing, Moscow, Frankfurt, and Istanbul.

### 3.5.3 AUDIOVISUAL AND INTERACTIVE MEDIA

State policy in audiovisual and interactive media in the Republic of Azerbaijan is implemented through the Ministry of Culture (for film and video) and the Audiovisual Council of the Republic of Azerbaijan (for TV and radio). In each of these supervisions, appropriate state programs and specific policies are adopted to promote the country's audio-visual and interactive media industry.

As part of the events dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the birth of national leader Heydar Aliyev, a film forum on the theme "Azerbaijani Cinema – 125: Reality, Challenges and Goals" was held at the Heydar Aliyev Centre from April 20 to 21, jointly organised by the Ministry of Culture and the Heydar Aliyev Centre. Famous film figures of the country, representatives of culture and the public, foreign guests and media representatives took part in panel discussions held within the framework of the forum on the themes "Ideology. National Cinema – Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow", "Creativity. Prospects of Modern Azerbaijani Cinema", "Business. Principles and Mechanisms for Financing Cinema and Other Audiovisual Works" and "Application of International Experience in Azerbaijani Cinema".

On November 20, 2023, the Ministry of Culture established the Expert Council for Evaluating the Content of Cinematographic, Digital and Other Audiovisual Works. The purpose of the Council, which will operate on a public basis, is to evaluate works intended for state funding,



as well as cinematographic and other audiovisual works (excluding audiovisual media materials) that are publicly broadcast throughout the country, regardless of the place of production, as well as content broadcast via digital platforms and internet information resources.

It is worth noting that the state provides substantial organisational and financial support for the development of cinematography through the Cinema Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan (ARKA) under the authority of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Thus, film project competitions were held for the 2023-2024 period to support the development of the film industry and encourage new and creative projects. Overall, forty-seven film projects were presented and considered, encompassing patriotic, historical, comedic, children, and documentary content, as well as student projects. Only during 2023-2024 did the funds allocated to local film production amount to 15,112,809 manats, of which 167,000 AZN was allocated for student films. In this regard, 16 films have already been delivered; five are in the filming stage, five are in post-production, and five are in the preparation stage.

The list of international film festivals, received state support during 2023-2024, include the DokuBaku International Documentary Film Festival (held in 2023 and 2024), the "SALAM" International Youth Film Festival (2023 and 2024), the III "Korkut Ata" Turkic World Film Festival (2023), the Baku International Film Festival (2023 and 2024), the ANIMAFILM International Animation Festival (2023 and 2024), the "CINEMO" Mobile Film Festival (2023 and 2024), and the "Baku Cinema Breeze" (BCB) International Film Festival (2024)

On April 5 - June 6, 2024, the Media Development Agency and the Audiovisual Council hold a nationwide competition for terrestrial television broadcasters for the production and distribution of audiovisual products (prepared in a state order) to promote the production and distribution of audience-oriented and target-oriented content in the new media environment, increase the competitiveness of educational materials, stimulate content diversity and creativity, and effectively deliver information to the public about priority areas for the state and society. The winning television channels were determined in the competition on the topics of scientific-mass, cultural-educational, the education; science and culture; national customs and traditions and family values; developing national identity, moral values and a sense of patriotism in the younger generation; physical and spiritual development of children and youth; the history of Azerbaijani statehood; and on the topic of ecology and environmental protection. In the social video category, television channels that focused on new directions of Azerbaijani ideology, the promotion of the national idea; the physical and spiritual development of children and youth, the development of national identity, moral values, and a sense of patriotism in the younger generation; and ecology and environmental protection achieved success.

#### 3.5.4 MUSIC

The primary objectives of state cultural policy regarding musical art are to foster various forms of creativity and performing initiatives, integrate them into global cultural processes, and cultivate a diverse musical environment. In this regard, targeted work is being carried out on the continuous implementation of complex measures to promote the creativity of composers to create musical works of high artistic quality; organisation of festivals, competitions and



concerts in various musical genres, as well as ensuring the participation of Azerbaijani artistic collectives and soloists in international events; etc.

Among the leading concert venues are the Azerbaijan State Academic Philharmonic, named after Muslim Magomayev, the Azerbaijan State Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre, the Heydar Aliyev Palace, the International Mugham Centre, the Azerbaijan State Song Theatre, the Azerbaijan State Children's Philharmonic, and the Ganja State Philharmonic. The state supports this infrastructure, repairs, and puts in order the buildings of these organisations, equipping them with modern technologies and concert and stage equipment. Thus, for example, the Azerbaijan State Academic Philharmonic building was restored and reconstructed, and the necessary equipment was provided to meet modern requirements entirely at the state's expense. Additionally, major repair and restoration work has commenced at the Azerbaijan State Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre, encompassing repairs to the stage, the theatre's acoustic system, and the orchestra pit, among other areas.

The most famous musical groups of the country are the Azerbaijan State Symphony Orchestra named after Uzeyir Hajibeyli, the Azerbaijan State Choir Capella, the Azerbaijan State Chamber Orchestra named after G.Garayev, the Azerbaijan State Piano Trio, the Azerbaijan State String Quartet, the Azerbaijan State Folk Song and Dance Ensemble named after F.Amirov, the Azerbaijan State Orchestra of Folk Instruments, etc. The state partially finances these musical groups by purchasing professional instruments and stage costumes, covering fixed wages, and providing social support to the artistic staff, among other expenses.

Large-scale regular musical events such as the National Mugham Competition, the "Mugham World" International Music Festival, the "Khari Bulbul" International Music Festival, the Gabala International Music Festival, and the Uzeyir Hajibeyli International Music Festival have proven themselves to be serious instruments in revealing people's creative potential and developing the music industry.

An effective mechanism for supporting musical art is the orders of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on celebrating anniversary events, within which a set of events are implemented. Among those issued in recent years are Orders of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan [\*On the celebration of the 200th anniversary of Ashiq Alasgar \(No.2511 of February 18, 2021\)\*](#), [\*On the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Baku Academy of Music named after Uzeyir Hajibeyli \(No.2659 of May 26, 2021\)\*](#), [\*On the celebration of the 100th anniversary of Fikret Amirov \(No.3183 of March 15, 2022\)\*](#), [\*On the celebration of the 100th anniversary of Rauf Hajiyev \(No. 3212 of April 13, 2022\)\*](#), [\*On the celebration of the 100th anniversary of Suleyman Alasgarov \(No.21 of February 22, 2024\)\*](#), [\*On the celebration of the 140th anniversary of Uzeyir Hajibeyli \(No.462 of February 3, 2025\)\*](#), etc.

On October 29-31, 2023, the first Music Forum was organised by the Heydar Aliyev Foundation and the Ministry of Culture. The Music Forum, organised with the support of the Baku Music Academy named after Uzeyir Hajibeyli, the Azerbaijan National Conservatory, the Azerbaijan State University of Culture and Arts, and the Azerbaijan Composers' Union, was attended by well-known musicologists, conductors, composers and performers of country, as well as specialists invited from foreign countries, who held panel discussions on the topics of "Music education in Azerbaijan: schools of composition and performance", "Traditional music genres", "Development of the national music industry", "Promotion of national cultural traditions on a

global scale”, “Azerbaijani musicology at the crossroads of research”, “The art of choreography: national dance, ballet, modern dance forms”.

### 3.5.5 DESIGN AND CREATIVE SERVICES

The Ministry of Culture is conducting targeted work to develop design and creative services as part of its overall cultural policy, supporting the country's cultural and creative industries. Periodic forums, summits, and awards on these topics provide evidence of this. Thus, the [Azerbaijan Design Forum](#) was the country's first annual design forum, bringing together professionals in this field. Its 2019 edition was held at the International Mugham Centre on 23 November 2019, organised by Azerbaijan Digital Arts School and Graphic Design Azerbaijan, with the support of the Ministry of Culture. The forum's primary purpose was to bring together Azerbaijani designers, exchange experiences and discuss and share the most innovative approaches in the design field. The event also discussed the importance of Baku's inclusion in the UNESCO Network of Creative Cities in the “Design” category in the same year. In total, 611 works by more than 400 designers were submitted to the Azerbaijan Design Forum 2019 competition, organised into 10 categories: branding, packaging design, illustration, web design, industrial design, application design, interior design, exterior design, print design, and outdoor design. The works were evaluated anonymously online by a jury of world-renowned professionals comprising 18 judges from six countries.

Gradually, the forum evolved into a summit, the last of which took place on June 30, 2024. The “Azerbaijan Design Summit 2024” was held with the support of the Ministry of Culture and was committed to fostering innovation and cultural exchange on a global scale. The summit has garnered the attention of experts from 50 countries and over 2,000 participants worldwide. The summit's primary objective was to host a competitive exhibition showcasing over 230 projects across 14 categories. A distinguished panel of 50 judges from around the world evaluated the submissions, ensuring a fair and comprehensive decision-making process. This gathering of esteemed professionals further underscored the summit's importance as a global platform for design dialogue.

Established in 2018, the [Azerbaijan Design Award](#) is a competition platform aimed at discovering creative and outstanding design talent, thereby enhancing the quality of the design industry. The first professional competition platform in Azerbaijan's design industry, it brings together professionals from over 10 design fields. The final night of the 4th Azerbaijan Design Award competition took place on June 24, 2023, with the organisational support of the Ministry of Culture and the Azerbaijan Designers Association, offering free-of-charge participation to local and international designers. Over 700 designers participated in the competition, submitting more than 1,200 projects across 16 categories. The competition winners were evaluated by 22 judges representing 10 countries, with 1st to 5th places awarded in each category.

On December 3, 2023, Azerbaijan Fashion Week was held under the organisation of the Ministry of Culture, bringing together designers working in fashion, buyers, local and foreign media representatives, and anyone interested in the field for potential cooperation. As part of the event, the Azerbaijan Fashion Forwards Competition, which aims to support young fashion designers studying in higher education institutions and fashion schools in the country, was

held, along with a master class by renowned fashion designers. The event concluded with a fashion show, during which 20 designers from various countries presented their collections.

### 3.5.6 CULTURAL AND CREATIVE TOURISM

The new [\*Law on Tourism \(No.448-VIQ of December 27, 2021\)\*](#) defines the foundations of state management in the field of tourism, mechanisms for regulating the tourism industry, rules for the efficient use of tourism resources, and sources of financing for the tourism sector to ensure the sustainable development of tourism in the Republic of Azerbaijan. The law defines cultural tourism as the experience of acquainting oneself with the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of the country or place being visited. Gastronomic tourism is defined as tourism accompanied by tourists' acquaintance with traditional and/or innovative culinary samples and food products of the country or place being visited, local food producers, participation in culinary festivals, and other similar events. In turn, the [\*Law on Culture \(No.506-IVQ of 21 December 2012\)\*](#) includes the development and promotion of cultural, ecological, biological, and sports tourism as the main directions of state policy in the cultural sector. The use of cultural heritage sites for tourism purposes is carried out in accordance with the laws of the Republic of Azerbaijan, specifically the Law on Culture, Laws [\*On Specially Protected Natural Areas and Sites \(No.840-IQ of March 24, 2000\)\*](#) and [\*On the Protection of Historical and Cultural Monuments \(No.470-IQ of April 10, 1998\)\*](#).

[\*The State Tourism Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan\*](#), a central executive authority that implements state policy and regulation in the field of tourism, as well as the protection of historical and cultural monuments located in the territories of state reserves under its jurisdictions, was established according to the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan [\*On Certain Measures Related to the Improvement of State Management in the Field of Culture and Tourism \(No.4 of April 20, 2018\)\*](#). To implement the state tourism policy, the State Tourism Agency has eight regional tourism departments in Baku-Absheron, Ganja, Sheki, Lankaran, Mingachevir, Guba, Karabakh and Ismayilli. [\*The Azerbaijan Tourism and Management University \(ATMU\)\*](#), [\*the Baku Tourism Vocational School\*](#), and the Mingachevir Tourism College operate within the framework of the State Tourism Agency.

[\*The Tourism Information System\*](#), led by the State Tourism Agency, is a "state-business" and "business-business" platform, the country's unified state information system in tourism. The system's primary goal is to enhance the competitiveness of the tourism sector, disseminate accurate and reliable information, promote the quality of tourism services offered in the country, and support the branding processes and corporate development of business entities. The Tourism Registry and an exceptional quality program are conducted within the system, a data warehouse is created, and electronic services are provided. The Tourism Registry aims to collect, process, search, analyse and transmit information about tourism resources, products and industry subjects in a single source, monitor that information, and improve the quality of tourism products and services.

[\*The Azerbaijan Tourism Board \(ATB\)\*](#), a division of the State Tourism Agency, aims to establish the country's tourism brand, enhance its competitiveness in the global tourism market, and increase the recognition of Azerbaijan as a tourism destination by promoting it locally and internationally. Four Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) of the Board operate in Ganja, Lankaran, Quba, and Sheki, directly linking national-level tourism organisations to the

public and private sectors and the community at the regional and local levels. [Azerbaijan Tourism Strategy 2023-2026](#) defines tourism development through a 9-pillar model: Tourism governance, Regulatory capacity, Destination development, heritage and communities, Brand, marketing and communications, Tourism products and experiences, Digitalisation, technology and innovation, Data analysis and research, Tourism investment and public-private partnerships, and Human resource development.

[The Reserves Management Centre](#), under the State Tourism Agency, is responsible for nine of the 29 historical, cultural, architectural, artistic, and ethnographic reserves operating in the Republic of Azerbaijan. These reserves encompass 210 historical and cultural monuments, four museums, and one house of culture, all situated on their respective territories.

## 4. Law and legislation

### 4.1 General legislation

#### 4.1.1 CONSTITUTION

Following the Constitutional Referendum on November 12, 1995, the new [\*Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan\*](#) came into force on November 27, 1995. Besides general guarantees, fundamental rights, freedoms, and responsibilities, the *Constitution* includes provisions related to culture, cultural rights, freedom of expression and creativity, copyright protection, heritage protection, and other relevant areas.

*Article 40 of the Constitution, "Right to Culture,"* provides that everyone has the right to participate in cultural life and to utilise cultural institutions and values. It also stipulates that everyone must respect and care for historical, cultural, and spiritual heritage and protect historical and cultural monuments.

*Article 51 of the Constitution, "Freedom of Creative Activity,"* secures everyone's right to engage in creative activities and guarantees freedom in literary, artistic, scientific, technical, and other forms of creative expression.

*Article 30 of the Constitution, "Right to Intellectual Property,"* declares that everyone has the right to intellectual property and that copyright, patent rights, and other intellectual property rights are protected by law.

The interests of artists and cultural workers are also reflected in various articles of the *Constitution*, including *"Freedom of thought and speech"* (Article 47), *"Freedom of information"* (Article 50), and *"Protection of historical and cultural monuments"* (Article 77), among others.

#### 4.1.2 ALLOCATION OF PUBLIC FUNDS

Legislative procedures for allocating public funds for culture in the Republic of Azerbaijan are defined by the [\*Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan \(No.00 of November 12, 1995\)\*](#), the [\*Law on the Budget System \(No.358-IIQ of July 2, 2002\)\*](#), annual laws of the Republic of Azerbaijan and decrees of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the state budget, and annual laws and Presidential decrees on executing the state budget. In addition, approved by corresponding decisions of the Cabinet of Ministers, the [\*Rules of Preparation and Execution of the State Budget \(No. 75 of May 24, 2004\)\*](#) and the [\*Unified Budget Classification of the Republic of Azerbaijan \(No. 440 of October 11, 2018\)\*](#) are the instruments governing these procedures for state bodies.

The competence of the Milli Majlis (parliament) of the Republic of Azerbaijan includes approving the state budget upon the President's submission and supervising its implementation. An annual state budget law approves the revenues and expenditures for the following year, including centralised and local. Tax revenues from the state budget are allocated to corresponding purposes at the level of sections and subsections of the functional classification, including activities in culture, the arts, and related fields.

After adopting the annual law on the state budget, the President signs a special Decree on several issues related to applying this law, which approves the order of financing of

organisations and events from the state budget. The Decree also defines the distribution of budgetary funds for culture between central and local institutions, as well as the allocation of funds for specific activities and events. This legal act also specifies the costs of education in culture and art, the regulation of wages and other social measures, charges for strengthening and overhauling material and technical bases, and extra-budgetary expenditures of budgetary organisations. Finally, the Ministry of Finance specifies the incomes and expenses of sources based on approved indicators for the state budget of the next fiscal year and submits it to the Ministry of Culture.

Generally, proposals for allocating public funds to culture are based on forecasts of the country's economic and social development for the following year and the subsequent three years. Targeted programs and the evaluation of cultural activity results are collected during the preparation process for the draft state budget, which begins 11 months before the next budget year. All budgetary cultural institutions participate in this process, submitting their budget requests and forecasts to the Ministry of Culture through the administrative hierarchy, integrating them into a single application.

The issue can be raised before the Milli Majlis through a legislative initiative if a necessity arises for a review of the state budget during the execution process, and it was not possible to consider the need during the preparation and approval of the current year's state budget. The Ministry of Culture may also request that the Ministry of Finance transfer funds allocated between paragraphs of the approved indicators for the current state budget year in the second half of the year, if necessary.

Budgetary institutions and organisations procure goods, works, and services based on the [\*Law on Public Procurement \(No.988-VIQ of July 14, 2023\)\*](#). However, if the amount of the specified public procurement is equal to or exceeds AZN 50 thousand, compulsory public tendering for funds is announced via the Public Procurement Electronic Portal of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

All budget proposals are prepared in accordance with the Unified Budget Classification.

#### 4.1.3 SOCIAL SECURITY FRAMEWORKS

According to Article 38 of the [\*Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan \(No.00 of November 12, 1995\)\*](#), "everyone has the right to social security". Social welfare issues are detailed described by laws [\*On Social Benefits \(No. 55-IIIQ of February 7, 2006\)\*](#), [\*On Social Insurance \(No.250-IQ of February 18, 1997\)\*](#), [\*On Protection of Public Health \(No. 360-IQ of June 26, 1997\)\*](#), [\*On Medical Insurance \(No. 725-IQ of October 28, 1999\)\*](#), [\*On Labour Pensions \(No. 54-IIIQ of February 7, 2006\)\*](#), [\*On Social Services \(No. 275-IVQ of December 30, 2011\)\*](#), [\*On Unemployment Insurance \(No.765-VQ of June 30, 2017\)\*](#), [\*On the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(No. 1153-VQ of May 31, 2018\)\*](#), [\*On Employment \(No.1196-VQ of June 29, 2018\)\*](#), et cetera.

[\*The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Population of the Republic of Azerbaijan\*](#) regulates the labour market and ensures social protection for the population. The State Social Protection Fund under the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Population regulates social insurance activities and provides citizens with pensions.



The following public legal entities under the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Population were established based on the previous corresponding state services according to the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan [\*On Additional Measures to Improve Governance in the Field of Social Protection \(No.912 of December 30, 2019\)\*](#):

- The State Employment Agency conducts activities related to the organisation of active employment measures, management of unemployment insurance funds, standards for social protection of job seekers and the unemployed, as well as labour market analysis;
- The State Social Protection Fund regulates activities in the sector of social insurance and the provision of pensions to citizens;
- The State Agency for Medical-Social Expertise and Rehabilitation operates in disability identification and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities;
- The Social Services Agency provides social services to individuals and families in need, enhancing their social protection and welfare and implementing state policies and regulations related to adoption.

According to the [\*Rules for the Organisation of self-employment \(No. 168 of May 13, 2020\)\*](#), the organisation of self-employment is carried out by the relevant state agency in the following stages: providing advice and information on the organisation of self-employment; assistance in the selection and organisation of self-employment in the sectors of the economy, based on the analysis of the labour market; help in the preparation of a business plan for the organisation of self-employment, including conducting trainings and evaluating their results; provision of materials, equipment and other property in kind to unemployed and job-seeking persons for the organisation of the selected self-employment direction on a contractual basis for one year; and periodic monitoring of the activities of a person involved in self-employment.

These general social security measures are relevant to culture, and the mentioned schemes would apply to those working in the cultural sector, including self-employed artists. The [\*Law on Culture \(No.506-IVQ of 21 December 2012\)\*](#) also provides social security measures for cultural workers. Social protection of cultural activity subjects is a key component of the state's policy, and the organisation of incentives for cultural workers and creative individuals for their services and contributions to cultural development is among the state's responsibilities. It applies to creative workers and includes provisions to improve the working conditions of artists and scientists, such as artists and sculptors receiving working space under favourable conditions (e.g., low rents). Salaries for cultural institutions with national status are significantly higher than those for institutions without this status. Workers actively involved in the country's cultural development and those with long service may be eligible for special pensions after retirement. Creative persons, winners of festivals and competitions, are awarded honorary titles, scholarships, orders and medals.

#### 4.1.4 TAX LAWS

The [\*Tax Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan \(No.905-IQ of July 11, 2000\)\*](#) outlines the tax system, general principles of taxation, and rules for establishing, paying, and taxing, among other provisions. At present, there is a unified legislative and regulatory framework for taxation, and as a result, the number of regulations and compliance with laws and regulations governing tax relations has decreased; the number of taxes has reduced, which simplifies

settlements with the budget of taxpayers; and the tax burden is reduced, which allows the tax system to play a regulatory (stimulating) role.

The most progressive aspect of the Tax Code is the implementation of simplified tax rates. Thus, under Article 218.1.1 of the Tax Code, individuals not registered for VAT purposes whose taxable transactions total AZN 200,000 or less in any month (or months) within a consecutive 12-month period can be payers of the simplified tax. According to Article 219.5 of the Tax Code, a legal entity paying simplified tax is not considered a VAT or profit taxpayer. Similarly, an individual (including one engaged in entrepreneurial activity without establishing a legal entity) is not considered a payer of income tax and VAT. According to article 220.10 of the Tax Code, the monthly fixed amount of the simplified tax for individuals engaged in leading, playing instruments, dancing, singing, comedy and other similar activities at weddings, parties and other events is AZN 20, and for individuals engaged in activities in the field of individual photo, audio-video services (except photo studios) is AZN 15.

Since January 2006, enterprises outside Baku have paid tax at a rate of 2%, while those registered in the capital have paid tax at 4% of their total turnover. Enterprise registration is submitted to the tax department and is usually implemented within three days.

The coverage of electronic services provided to taxpayers is also constantly expanding. In 2006, the Automated Tax Information System (AVIS) was established. In 2007, the Internet Tax Administration ([www.e-taxes.gov.az](http://www.e-taxes.gov.az)) began exchanging electronic documents with banks, as well as with legal entities and individuals, establishing a system for the electronic submission of tax returns. Furthermore, since January 1, 2010, electronic invoices have been used.

Since tax policy is a crucial tool for attracting finance and investment in culture and is essential for improving the social status and welfare of culture and art workers, there is a need to develop a comprehensive package of cultural legislation further. *[The Criteria for enterprises, institutions, and organisations operating in the fields of science, education, healthcare, sports, and culture for tax exemption purposes](#)* were approved by Decision No. 88 of the Cabinet of Ministers, dated March 12, 2020. Legal entities (enterprises, institutions, and organisations, except commercial legal entities) that organise artistic and cultural events, prepare and distribute published products, and produce films to promote, encourage, and develop Azerbaijani culture and national cultural heritage are exempt from tax. The same applies to those that function as theatres, libraries, or museums.

#### 4.1.5 LABOUR LAWS

The *[Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan \(No.00 of November 12, 1995\)](#)*, the *[Labour Code \(No.618-IQ of February 1, 1999\)](#)* and laws *[On Employment \(No.1196-VQ of June 29, 2018\)](#)*, *[On Trade Unions \(No. 792 of February 24, 1994\)](#)*, and the *[Law on Culture \(No.506-IVQ of 21 December 2012\)](#)* regulate employment including in the cultural field. A unified system of salaries is in place for employees working in various public sectors, and relationships between employers and workers are typically based on a contract system. The *[Law on State Service \(No. 926-IQ of July 21, 2000\)](#)* regulates the employment of state employees at all levels.

The Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan [\*On Measures to Establish the State Agency for Citizen Services and Social Innovations under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan and to Improve the Services Provided to Citizens by Government Agencies \(No.685 of July 13, 2012\)\*](#) established “ASAN service” centres. It is worth noting that ASAN centres, which enhance transparency and expedite the transition to e-services, have gained immense popularity among the population and have effectively eliminated potential corruption in interactions between officials and citizens.

[\*ABAD \(Facilitated Support to Family Business\)\*](#), a public legal entity managed by the State Agency for Public Service and Social Innovations under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, was established according to the [\*Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan No.1047 of September 23, 2016\*](#). ABAD centres implement projects to support family businesses in the decorative and applied arts and food production. In addition, ABAD centres provide business planning, marketing, training, branding and design, financial accounting, legal assistance and, most importantly, sales organisation and equipment. Furthermore, ABAD certifies manufactured products on the principle of a “one-stop-shop” logistics and sales organisation.

[\*The Small and Medium Business Development Agency \(KOBİA\)\*](#) of the Republic of Azerbaijan was established by [\*Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan No.1771, dated December 28, 2017\*](#). The goals are to improve business regulation and establish an effective coordination system to enhance the role and competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises in the country’s economy. In addition, they aimed to adapt the management system to modern requirements, strengthening the legal support of entrepreneurship and creating favourable conditions for developing entrepreneurship in the regions.

[\*Sustainable and Operational Social Security Agency \(DOST Agency\)\*](#), a public legal entity under the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Population, was established according to the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan [\*On Additional Measures to Improve Governance in the Areas of Employment, Labour, Social Protection and security \(No.229 of August 9, 2018\)\*](#). The DOST centres, managed by the Agency, provide services for appointing pensions, benefits, and employment and resolving other relevant issues.

#### 4.1.6 COPYRIGHT PROVISIONS

The Republic of Azerbaijan is a state member of the following international copyright agreements:

- *The Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works (June 4, 1999),*
- *The WIPO Copyright Treaty (April 11, 2006),*
- *The Convention Establishing the World Intellectual Property Organization (December 25, 1995),*
- *The WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty (April 11, 2006),*
- *The Convention for the Protection of Producers of Phonograms Against Unauthorized Duplication of Their Phonograms (September 1, 2001),*
- *The Rome Convention for the Protection of Performers, Producers of Phonograms and Broadcasting Organizations (October 8, 2005),*
- *The Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disabled (December 24, 2018);*

- *The Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of the Protection of Copyright and Neighbouring Rights (April 5, 1996);*
- *The European Convention on Cinematographic Co-Production (February 5, 2002),* etc.

The [\*Law on Copyright and Related Rights \(No.115-IQ of June 5, 1996\)\*](#) regulates the terms arising from the creation and use of scientific, literary and artistic works (copyright), also performances, phonograms, programs of air broadcasting or cable broadcasting organisations (related rights) in the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The basic principles of this Law on Copyright and Related Rights are similar to those in most European countries. First, it adheres to the "continental" conception of copyright as a personal right, preferring this approach over the Anglo-Saxon vision, which emphasises the commercial aspects of copyright. Secondly, the term "author" is interpreted broadly, as it is in other countries with high copyright protection standards. Finally, authorship is not restricted to directors, scriptwriters, and composers in the audio-visual field; it extends to camera operators and set designers.

The Act also recognises related rights, performers' rights, and the rights of phonogram producers and broadcasting bodies (TV and radio). Proportional payment is more beneficial for authors and other rights holders. However, the state fixes only the minimum payment rate, and payment methods are negotiated between rightsholders and the users of their works.

[\*The Law on Enforcement of the Intellectual Property Rights and Fight Against Piracy \(No.365-IVQ of May 22, 2012\)\*](#) regulate the relations for ensuring the enforcement of rights of those who are holders of intellectual property rights, protection of their interests, and preventing infringements, including illegal production and distribution of the copies of intellectual property objects.

[\*The Intellectual Property Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan\*](#) was established as a result of a merger of the Copyright Agency and Patents and Intellectual Property Agency according to the Order of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan [\*On Measures to Improve Management in the Field of Consumer Market Control, Standardization, Metrology and Protection of Intellectual Property Rights" \(No.5 of April 20, 2018\)\*](#). The Intellectual Property Agency is the public legal entity providing development of the field of copyrights, related rights, rights to compilations of data and topographies of integrated circuits, rights to inventions, utility models, industrial designs, trademarks and geographical indications, rights to Azerbaijani folklore expressions (traditional cultural expressions), traditional knowledge and other expressions of intangible cultural heritage implementing single regulation and control and coordinating activity in this field.

#### 4.1.7 DATA PROTECTION LAWS

The relations arising at the formation of information resources based on the creation, collection, processing, accumulation, keeping, search, and dissemination of information, at the establishment and use of information systems, technology and means for their insurance and at the protection of data are regulated with the [\*Law on Information, Informatization and Information Protection \(No.460-IQ of April 3, 1998\)\*](#). The most significant advantage of this law for the cultural sphere is the legal formulation of state policy regarding information

resources, including documents and collections of documents in information systems (libraries, archives, funds, data banks, etc.), as well as separately existing documents and their collections.

The [\*Law on Copyright and Related Rights \(No.115-IQ of June 5, 1996\)\*](#) protects all translations, anthologies, and collective works, including computer programs and databases.

The [\*Law on the National Archive Fund \(No 694-IQ of 22 June 1999\)\*](#) protects a set of documents reflecting the material and spiritual life of the people, regardless of the type, place of creation and storage and form of ownership, having historical, scientific, economic, political, social and cultural value, considered an integral part of the cultural heritage of the Azerbaijani people.

The [\*Law on the Legal Protection of Data Sets \(No.755-IIQ of September 14, 2004\)\*](#) regulates legal relations arising from creating and using data compilations, regardless of their form.

The [\*Law on Personal Data \(No.998-IIIQ of May 11, 2010\)\*](#) regulates personal data collection, processing, and use within the national information space, governs the questions related to the cross-border transfer of personal data and establishes the rights and obligations of states, local government bodies, physical persons, and legal entities operating in this sphere.

#### 4.1.8 LANGUAGE LAWS

According to the [\*Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan \(No.00 of November 12, 1995\)\*](#), the Azerbaijani language is the state language, and the state provides for its development. As such, the Azerbaijani language is used in all spheres of the country's political, social, economic, scientific, and cultural life.

[\*Law on the State Language in the Republic of Azerbaijan \(No.365-IIQ of September 30, 2002\)\*](#) defines that the Republic of Azerbaijan considers the use of the Azerbaijani language as the state language to be one of the main signs of its independent statehood, takes care of its application, protection and development, and creates the basis for meeting the national and cultural self-expression needs of Azerbaijanis around the world related to the Azerbaijani language.

The state language of the Republic of Azerbaijan is Azerbaijani, written in the Latin script. Printed products published in the state language must be issued in this alphabet. The norms of the state language encompass the orthography and orthoepy of the Azerbaijani literary language; legal entities, individuals, and officials must comply with these norms.

Regardless of the form of ownership, presenters of all television and radio channels established and operating within the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan and broadcasting in the state language must possess excellent knowledge of and be fluent in the state language. Films and programs dubbed on television and radio channels must comply with the language norms established by the state.

All media entities (press, television, radio, etc.), book publishing and other publishing organisations in the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan must ensure compliance with the norms of the Azerbaijani language.



#### 4.1.9 OTHER AREAS OF GENERAL LEGISLATION

With the restoration of the territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan by requirements of [\*resolutions, declarations and other documents of the United Nations, OSCE, OIC, ICESCO, Council of Europe, European Union, NATO, CIS, ECO, Turkic Council, GUAM, Non-Aligned Movement and et cetera\*](#), the Azerbaijani state and society are faced with the tasks of restoring the 20% of the internationally recognised territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan liberated from 30-year occupation from the consequences of total ethnic cleansing, uricide, ecocide and culturicide, the return of internally displaced persons, ensuring their social conditions and implementing employment programs.

It must be mentioned that during the occupation period, laws of the Republic of Azerbaijan [\*On the status of refugees and internally displaced persons \(IDPs\) \(No.668-IQ of May 21, 1999\)\*](#) and [\*On social protection of internally displaced persons and persons treated as such \(No.669-IQ of May 21, 1999\)\*](#) were in force and continue to be in force at present, [\*The State Program "On Resolving the Problems of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons" \(No.895 of September 17, 1998\)\*](#) was implemented, etc.

[\*The First State Program on the Great Return to the Liberated Territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan\*](#), approved by Order of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan (No.3587 of November 16, 2022), is planned to revive 100 settlements, including all liberated cities and gradually resettle 140 thousand forcibly displaced persons (34,500 families) to Karabakh and Eastern Zangezur by the end of 2026.

To revitalise business activity, attract investment to the liberated territories, and promote self-employment, residents of these areas and shareholders of legal entities based there have been granted several tax exemptions for a period of 10 years, commencing from January 1, 2023. In general, with the amendments made to [\*the Tax Code \(No.905-IQ of July 11, 2000\)\*](#), all areas of the real sector in the liberated territories, including trade, services, production, the construction sector, the extractive industry, and other relevant entities, are covered by tax incentives. Furthermore, [\*the Migration Code \(No. 713-IVQ of July 2, 2013\)\*](#) and [\*the Labour Code \(No.618-IQ of February 1, 1999\)\*](#) provide relevant benefits and incentive measures through applicable amendments.

Recognising its historical and cultural significance and exceptional spiritual value for the Azerbaijani people, the [\*City of Shusha has been declared the Cultural Capital of Azerbaijan\*](#) by Order of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan No. 2632, dated May 7, 2021. The [\*Law on the Cultural Capital of Azerbaijan – the city of Shusha \(No. 338-VIQ of May 31, 2021\)\*](#) establishes the legal and organisational foundations for the protection, restoration, study, development, and promotion of the city of Shusha, including the establishment of the Shusha City State Reserve within the administrative borders of the City of Shusha, the cultural capital of Azerbaijan.



## 4.2 Legislation on culture

### 4.2.1 GENERAL LEGISLATION ON CULTURE

Azerbaijani society is characterised by cultural diversity, so all laws related to culture are designed to cater to a broad range of cultural needs. Some laws are general (e.g., the [Law on Culture \(No.506-IVQ of 21 December 2012\)](#), and others are more specific (e.g., cinematography, town planning, museums, and publishing). The Law on Culture outlines the state's policy principles and aims and establishes the duties of the government and local authorities in this area. It guarantees the right of individuals to engage in creative activity, promotes international contacts and cooperation, prevents the monopolisation of culture, and covers the preservation and development of the cultural identity and heritage of Azerbaijan and ethnic minorities historically resident in its territory. The law aimed to legalise all trends and expertise in contemporary cultural policies and practices, such as art management, cultural marketing, fundraising, and production, and it provided measures to promote creativity and public agencies and organisations working in the cultural sphere. State interference is limited to prohibiting any material that is pornographic or which encourages violence, racial, national or religious intolerance or drug addiction. The development of legal guarantees for the arts and culture in the Republic of Azerbaijan involves the complex improvement of national cultural policy legislation, the enhancement of mechanisms for implementing international conventions and bilateral agreements, and the refinement of existing practices for protecting cultural and authors' rights.

**Table 2: List of existing cultural legislation**

Title of the law	Year of adoption
<i>On Culture</i>	Nº 506-IVQ of December 21, 2012
<i>On Copyright and Related Rights</i>	No.115-IQ of June 5, 1996
<i>On the Protection of Historical and Cultural Monuments</i>	No.470-IQ of April 10, 1998
<i>On Cinematography</i>	No.515-IQ of July 3, 1998
<i>On Library Work</i>	No.611-IQ of December 29, 1998
<i>On Museums</i>	No.839-IQ of 24 March 2000
<i>On Publishing</i>	No.887-IQ of 30 May 2000-ci il
<i>On the Legal Protection of Azerbaijani Folklore Samples</i>	No.460-IIQ of 16 May 2003
<i>On the Protection and Development of Azerbaijani Carpet Art</i>	Nº 799-IIQD of 7 December 2004
<i>On Theatre and Theatre Activities</i>	Nº 222-IIIQ of 29 December 2006

**Table 3: International legal instruments implemented by the Republic of Azerbaijan in the cultural field**

Title of the act	Year of adoption
<i>International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights</i>	1992
<i>Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its I and II Protocols</i>	1993 (Protocols in 1993 and 2000)
<i>Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage</i>	1993
<i>Black Sea Convention on Cooperation in the fields of Culture, Education, Science and Information</i>	1995
<i>Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees concerning Higher Education in the States belonging to the Europe Region</i>	1996
<i>Universal Copyright Convention</i>	1997
<i>Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property</i>	1997
<i>European Cultural Convention</i>	1997
<i>Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works</i>	1998
<i>Convention for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage of Europe</i>	1999
<i>European Convention on Cinematographic Co-Production</i>	1999
<i>UNIDROIT Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects</i>	2000
<i>Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage</i>	2006
<i>Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe</i>	2008
<i>Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions</i>	2009

#### 4.2.2 LEGISLATION ON CULTURE AND NATURAL HERITAGE

[Law on Culture \(No.506-IVQ of 21 December 2012\)](#) pays much attention to cultural heritage in general and its areas: immovable, movable, intangible cultural heritage, including historical and cultural monuments, cultural property, national cultural archives, underwater cultural heritage, national culinary examples, commitments to the protection of national cultural heritage and cultural values, mode of use of cultural objects, protected cultural treasures, export of cultural values, etcetera, outlined in relevant chapters.

The [Law on the Protection of Historical and Cultural Monuments \(No.470-IQ of April 10, 1998\)](#) defines the issues, specifies the responsibilities of state and local authorities, and lays down principles for the use, study, conservation, restoration, reconstruction, renovation and safety of historical and cultural monuments. The scope of the law encompasses archaeological and architectural objects, ethnographic, numismatic, epigraphic, and anthropological materials, as well as buildings, monuments, items related to historical events and personalities, and values associated with the people's religious beliefs. Furthermore, the law states that privatising state-owned monuments of the world or national importance is prohibited.

The [Law on the National Archive Fund \(No. 694-IQ of June 22, 1999\)](#) regulates the preservation and use of national archives, determines the ownership status of state and non-state archives and documents, and establishes the legal basis for managing this immense intellectual resource.

[Law on Museums \(No.839-IQ of March 24, 2000\)](#) regulates relations between museums and the state, defines the duties, functions, privileges and powers of both sides, lays down detailed rules on museum activity, promotes the protection, conservation, development and enrichment of museum collections, and improves the social security position of museum workers.

[Law on Specially Protected Natural Areas and Objects \(No.840-IQ dated March 24, 2000\)](#) declares that specially protected natural areas and objects are the national wealth of the Republic of Azerbaijan and possess exceptional ecological, scientific, cultural, and aesthetic value. It refers to state nature reserves (including biosphere reserves), national parks, nature reserves, ecological parks, zoological parks, geological parks, dendrological parks, natural monuments, botanical gardens, health resorts, and other similar protected areas. This law establishes the legal basis for the organisation and protection of specially protected natural areas within the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan, as well as the protection of specially protected natural objects.

The Cabinet of Ministers also approved the necessary rules and guides in this domain:

- [Rules of Import, Export and Transit of Cultural Values Through the Territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan \(No.294 of August 29, 2014\)](#),
- [Rules of Temporary Export of Cultural Values in Connection with Exhibitions, Tours, Restoration Works, Presentations, Carrying out of International Cultural Actions \(No.293 of August 29, 2014\)](#),
- [Rules for the Protection, Restoration and Use of Cultural Heritage in the Republic of Azerbaijan \(No.266 of 14 July 2015\)](#), and

- [\*Provided Guarantees to the Owners of National Cultural Heritage Objects to Ensure their Protection \(No.28 of February 3, 2016\)\*](#), and so forth.

#### 4.2.3 LEGISLATION ON PERFORMANCE AND CELEBRATION

Article 21.1.1 of the [\*Law on Culture \(No.506-IVQ of 21 December 2012\)\*](#) states, referring to Article 20.2 of the same law, that individuals, legal entities, including non-profit organisations may engage in organising art and other cultural events, including creative competitions, exhibitions, creative evenings, cultural and artistic presentations, festivals, conferences and symposiums following the corresponding laws such as *On the Protection of Historical and Cultural Monuments*, *On the Cultural Capital of Azerbaijan - Shusha*, *On Publishing*, *On Cinematography*, *On Theatre and Theatrical Activities*, *On Library work*, *On Museums*, *On Legal Protection of Samples of Azerbaijani Folklore*, *On the Protection and Development of Azerbaijani Carpet Art*, *On Mass Media*, *On Copyright and Related Rights*, *On education and the Civil Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan*. Furthermore, Article 25.1 of the *Law on Culture* stipulates that creative individuals who have made significant contributions to the development and promotion of culture, as well as winners of festivals and competitions, are awarded honorary titles, scholarships, and prizes. In addition, Article 45.3 of this law establishes that state funding is appropriate for the development of literature, art, design, architecture, music, choreography, theatre and circus, cinema, museums and libraries, painting and sculpture, folk art, folklore, and the implementation of projects on education and scientific research in the field of culture.

The [\*Law on the Legal Protection of Samples of Azerbaijani Folklore \(No.460-IIQ of May 16, 2003\)\*](#) regulates the relationships arising from the legal protection, use, and maintenance of national folklore expressions, which are a component of cultural heritage and constitute a distinct type of intellectual property. Article 6 of this law, "Requirements for the Use of Folklore Samples," states that the use of folklore samples in traditional and customary forms, including commercial ones, is free in the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Legal entities and individuals from other states may use folklore samples for commercial purposes outside the borders of the Republic of Azerbaijan only with the permission of the organisation established by the relevant executive authority and upon fee payment. That fee shall promote intellectual creativity and safeguard and enrich folklore expressions. Article 8 of the law provides that in all published works, in cases of public performance and communication of folklore samples, their source must be indicated, as well as the geographical name of the place where the folklore sample used originated and (or) the name of the people (society) to which it belongs.

The [\*Law on Theatres and Theatre Activities \(No.222-IIIQ of December 29, 2006\)\*](#) regulates the relations arising from the preparation and public performance of theatrical spectacles, as well as determines the legal foundations of theatrical activity and state care for theatres. Chapter IV of this law ("Exclusive right to live performance of theatrical spectacle") defines subjects of the exclusive right in connection with the live performance of a theatrical spectacle; rights of authors, directors and performers concerning theatrical spectacle; producer's rights regarding the public performance of a theatre spectacle; responsibilities of the producer regarding the preservation of the artistic solution of a theatrical performance; and protection of rights related to theatrical performances.

#### 4.2.4 LEGISLATION ON VISUAL ARTS AND CRAFTS

The [\*Law on Culture \(No.506-IVQ of 21 December 2012\)\*](#) defines artisanship as intangible cultural heritage, encompassing applied, traditional, decorative, and national fine arts. Works of fine arts (including plaques, pictures, drawings, engravings, stamps, lithographs, patterns, sculptures, original art collections and montage) and works of applied art (carpets and carpet products, gold, platinum, silver, precious stones, copper and clay items, ceramics) are classified as cultural values.

[\*Law on Legal Protection of the Samples of Azerbaijani Folklore \(No.460-IIQ of May 16, 2003\)\*](#) also applies to examples of applied arts and folk crafts, including graphic arts, paintings, series drawings, shadow paintings, forging and carving, sculpture, ceramics, clay, mosaics, metalwork, copper and bronze castings, silkworm breeding, carpet weaving, copper smithing, jewellery, tanning, embroidery, basket-making, clothes, ornaments, patterns, musical instruments, carpentry, architectural works and other such examples.

The [\*Law on the Protection and Development of Azerbaijani Carpet Art \(No.799-IIGD of December 7, 2004\)\*](#) regulates the relations arising from the preservation, study, promotion, and development of Azerbaijani carpets, which are woven in the historical territory of Azerbaijan and are currently hand-woven by folk artisans, masters, and artists. This law is a brilliant example of concrete and practical visual arts and crafts legislation.

First, it underlines that the Azerbaijani carpet is a material and spiritual wealth of the Azerbaijani people, the result of intellectual activity, reflecting the aesthetic outlook, artistic talent, originality and cultural identity of the people, and provides the primary indicators of the Azerbaijani carpet as follows:

- Type of carpet (pileless and piled carpet);
- Carpet art schools (Guba, Shirvan, Derbent, Baku, Ganja, Gazakh, Borchali, Goycha, Karabakh, Nakhchivan, Tabriz, Ardabil, Zanzan, Khalkhal, Urmia, Garadagh, Marand, Maragha);
- Carpet names (names determined by the place of weaving, taste, composition, the pattern of the carpet);
- Sample (a technical project of the composition and pattern of the rug to be woven, prepared by the artist);
- Artistic features - composition of the carpet (pattern and colour arrangement), ornament (national pattern and its elements), colour (colour shades or colour solution).

Second, the relevant executive authority must compile and maintain a register of Azerbaijani carpets to create a database on the type, school, names, weaving techniques, dye composition, and artistic features of the carpets.

Third, the law provides for the certification of Azerbaijani carpets, i.e., the words "Azerbaijan" and the name of the school of carpet weaving are woven with loops on both mass-produced and individually woven Azerbaijani carpets. The carpets are certified in accordance with the procedure established by the relevant executive authority to determine their conformity and artistic significance to folk art samples.

#### 4.2.5 LEGISLATION ON BOOKS AND PRESS

[Law on Library Work \(No.611-IQ of December 29, 1998\)](#) defines the basic principles of state policy in the field of library work, the general foundations of library work and the library system, the requirements for the formation and protection of library funds, the sources of financing of libraries, the rights and obligations of citizens in the field of using libraries, and the principles of international cooperation in the field of library work. The main principles of state policy in library work are open access to cultural and information resources preserved in libraries, state care for libraries as national treasures, their fund's immunity, and preferred financing.

The [Law on Publishing \(No.887-IQ of May 30, 2000\)](#) defines the general principles of publishing, regulates the relations between publishing subjects concerning the organisation and implementation of publishing activities, and determines their rights and obligations.

Publishers, printing companies, and distributors are entirely free in preparing thematic plans and programs, selecting topics and authors, determining the circulation, price and trade supplements (discounts) of publications (except for publications financed based on state programs), and forms of communication with each other and other legal entities and individuals.

Article 68 ("Mandatory copies") of the [Law on Media \(No.471-VIQ of December 30, 2021\)](#), Article 15 of the *Law on Libraries* ("Provision of libraries with free compulsory copies") and Article 22 of the *Law on Publishing* ("Mandatory copies") regulate legal deposit (compulsory library copies) matters. Obligatory copies of printed materials issued by state and non-state publishing houses, polygraph enterprises engaged in publishing activities, and other legal entities must be sent to the library designated by the Ministry of Culture (three free obligatory copies) and to the libraries determined by the Milli Majlis (two free mandatory copies). Additionally, all newspapers and magazines published in the Republic of Azerbaijan must provide two complimentary copies of their publications to the libraries specified above. Electronic versions of the obligatory copies must also be submitted to libraries, as stipulated in the contract between the customer and the publisher. The use of objects in the library fund is governed by the requirements of the [Law on Copyright and Related Rights \(No.115-IQ of June 5, 1996\)](#).

#### 4.2.6 LEGISLATION ON AUDIOVISUAL AND INTERACTIVE MEDIA

The [Law on Cinematography \(No.515-IQ of July 3, 1998\)](#) defines the forms of state protection of cinematography and the rights and obligations of individuals and legal entities engaged in cinematographic activities. It also establishes legal guarantees for implementing state policy in protecting and developing cinematography, a specific art form. The primary forms of state support for cinematography are recognised as the following: the establishment of legislation in the field of cinematography, the preparation and implementation of the state program; ensuring the creative, educational, production, material and technical, scientific and information base of cinematography, training cinematographic personnel; state support for the protection and development of cinematography, creating conditions for the distribution and screening of films, holding film festivals and other promotional events; financing the production, distribution of movies made based on state orders and their participation in



international film festivals, the filming of film chronicles and the state film fund; ensuring the creation of films for children and youth and debut films; ensuring international cooperation in the field of cinematography.

According to the [\*Rules on Distribution and Demonstration of Films \(No.165 of July 6, 2006\)\*](#), all films permitted for distribution and public exhibition in the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan are registered with the Ministry of Culture and included in the State Film Register.

The Republic of Azerbaijan has seized European cooperation opportunities in film production through the [\*Law on Accession to the European Convention on Joint Film Production \(No.731-IQ of October 28, 1999\)\*](#). The Ministry of Culture is the authorised body of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the field of co-production provided for by the European Convention on Cinematographic Co-Production.

[\*Law on Media \(No.471-VIQ of December 30, 2021\)\*](#), which replaced the laws "On Mass Media" (1999) and "On Television and Radio Broadcasting" (2002), places significant emphasis on audiovisual media, including audiovisual media entities and fundamentals of their activities, broadcasters, providers, operators, broadcasting right, duties of the audiovisual broadcaster and requirements for audiovisual broadcasting, etc. The law establishes that the Audiovisual Council regulates audiovisual media in the Republic of Azerbaijan, defining its status, principles of operation, independence, areas of activity, duties and rights, management of its activities, and the terms of service for its members. Additionally, the law establishes rules for licensing in the audiovisual media sector.

According to the [\*Rules for Maintaining the Media Register \(No.1846 of September 26, 2022\)\*](#), the inclusion of journalists in the Media Register is voluntary. Media entities are entirely independent in issuing their licenses to journalists working with them. The law does not regulate the activities of social networks and bloggers, and Internet television stations are not required to obtain a license.

[\*Law on Public Television and Radio Broadcasting \(No.767-IIQ of September 28, 2004\)\*](#) outlines specific cultural obligations that public broadcasters must record performances, feature, documentary and cartoon films, serials, works of art, and important historical and cultural events on the works of Azerbaijani and world authors and keeping them in the golden fund of the public broadcaster for future generations; Programs should reflect national and spiritual values, national customs and traditions, all the diversity of culture and art. According to the Article "Requirements for public broadcasting programs" of this Law, "the programs prefer to broadcast film, TV, video, and radio products produced in Azerbaijan."

#### 4.2.7 LEGISLATION ON DESIGN AND CREATIVE SERVICE

The responsibilities of the state in the field of culture also encompass architecture, design, advertising, and other areas of activity, as outlined in the [\*Law on Culture \(No.506-IVQ of 21 December 2012\)\*](#). Design works, architectural projects, parks, natural landscape objects, and architectural monuments are classified as cultural property. Architectural, archaeological, cultural, historical, religious, and secular monuments are classified as national cultural heritage. Archaeological sites, natural areas, architectural complexes of historical and artistic interest, and works of art are considered immovable cultural heritage.

The copying of cultural values and their use for advertising purposes must comply with the requirements of the [\*Law on Copyright and Related Rights \(No.115-IQ of June 5, 1996\)\*](#).

The [\*Law on Architectural Activity \(No.497-IQ of May 15, 1998\)\*](#) aims to regulate and maintain architectural harmony, preserving the architectural heritage that has given Azerbaijani cities their unique character over the centuries.

The [\*Urban Planning and Construction Code \(No.392-IVQ of June 29, 2012\)\*](#) devotes significant attention to landscape issues. It requires the protection of historical landscapes, cultural heritage sites, and specially protected natural areas or facilities as part of urban planning and construction activities.

The [\*Law on Advertising \(No.1281-IVQ of May 15, 2015\)\*](#) establishes the legal basis for relations in the field of ordering, production (preparation) and broadcasting of advertising, their control and regulation, and self-regulation in advertising.

## 5. Arts and cultural education

### 5.1 Policy and institutional overview

The Republic of Azerbaijan employs a multi-level and diverse arts and cultural education and training system designed to train professionals and introduce cultural values to virtually all pupils and students. The system offers three-level special training, encompassing out-of-school arts and cultural education, vocational and professional training, and higher arts education. At the same time, compulsory secondary education includes curricula related to arts and culture. This approach is justified by society's need for professional cultural and artistic figures and a prepared audience capable of appreciating national and world cultural and artistic masterpieces and, more broadly, a culturally educated young generation.

The Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Science and Education are the central government bodies responsible for arts and cultural education and training in the Republic of Azerbaijan; all public arts and cultural education and training institutions are divided between these two ministries. Such a division requires serious coordination of efforts between these government bodies to fulfil the social order in cultural and arts education.

Thus, the Ministry of Culture implements the state cultural policy for the out-of-school arts and cultural education sphere and supervises children's music, art, painting, mugham, and ashig schools and centres, which offer primary and secondary out-of-school education to children, adolescents, and young people. In addition, the Baku Choreography Academy is also part of the Ministry of Culture's system and offers general, secondary specialised, and higher education programs in choreography.

The Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan is the central executive body responsible for developing and implementing the state education policy, ensuring state control over education and its quality. The Ministry of Science and Education oversees arts and cultural education in secondary schools by implementing curricula in music, fine arts, literature, and life knowledge. Vocational and professional education in culture and the arts at secondary specialised educational institutions (colleges) are also under the oversight of the Ministry of Science and Education. Along with this, the Ministry of Science and Education supervises most higher arts and cultural education institutions, as well as higher education institutions that offer partial teaching of individual cultural specialisations.

Concerning the last structural reforms in the sphere of education, it is necessary to mention that according to the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan [\*On some measures to improve the management in the field of science and education in the Republic of Azerbaijan \(No.1769 of July 28, 2022\)\*](#), the Ministry of Education was renamed to Ministry of Science and Education, to strengthen the science and education interaction and to improve management in these fields, and the State Agency for Science and Higher Education and the State Agency for Preschool and General Education were established under the Ministry of Science and Education.

The Children's Art Festival (<https://uif.az/>), jointly organised by the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Science and Education, and the Heydar Aliyev Centre, is a notable initiative that showcases emerging talents, nurtures children's creative potential, and creates broader opportunities in the arts. The biennial festival has attracted significant interest since its

inaugural edition in 2023, during which up to 27,000 children applied. From these applications, 408 winners were selected and recognised at the festival, which featured 22 nominations (18 individual and four collective) across three age groups: 6-9 years, 10-13 years, and 14-17 years.

## **5.2 Arts in schools**

To describe artistic education in schools, we must consider general education schools where specific hours a week are devoted to cultural education and specialised schools in which some areas of the arts are the priority. The field is regulated by the [\*Law on Education \(No.833-IIIQ of June 19, 2009\)\*](#), the [\*Law on General Education \(No.1532-VQ of March 29, 2019\)\*](#), the new edition of [\*State standards of general education in the Republic of Azerbaijan \(No.361 of September 29, 2020\)\*](#) and the new [\*Model Charter of a General Educational Institution Established by the State and Municipality \(No.300 of June 13, 2024\)\*](#). The management of the educational process in secondary schools is carried out by the State Agency for Preschool and General Education under the Ministry of Science and Education.

Four curricula prepared by the Institute of Education under the Ministry of Science and Education are devoted to culture and the arts at the national level:

- *Educational Program (Curriculum) on Music for I-IX Grades of Secondary Schools of the Republic of Azerbaijan;*
- *Educational Program (Curriculum) on Fine Arts for I-IX Grades of Secondary Schools of the Republic of Azerbaijan;*
- *Educational Program (Curriculum) on Literature for V-XI Grades of Secondary Schools of the Republic of Azerbaijan;*
- *Educational Program (Curriculum) on Life Knowledge for III, IV, VIII and IX Grades of Secondary Schools of the Republic of Azerbaijan.*

Listed educational programs teach these disciplines to pupils of relevant secondary school grades in the volume of weekly lessons, each of a standard duration of 45 minutes. The primary purpose of systematically teaching these educational programs in secondary schools is to provide aesthetic education and training for pupils based on the best examples of national and world music, fine arts, and literature and to instil communication, behavioural, and cultural values within life knowledge. Education at state schools is free and compulsory for children between the ages of six and fifteen – they are entitled to nine years of mandatory general education. The general education system in the Republic of Azerbaijan consists of Primary education (grades 1–4, ages 6–9), Basic education (grades 5–9, ages 10–14) and Secondary education (grades 10–11, ages 15–16).

Specialised schools, such as the Secondary Music School named after Bulbul, the Secondary Specialised Music School-Studio of the Baku Music Academy named after U. Hajibeyli, and the Art Gymnasium under the Azerbaijan National Conservatory, form a symbiosis of general secondary education and an 11-year music school. The middle level of the Baku Choreographic Academy, under the Ministry of Culture, offers general secondary and general choreographic education.

### 5.3 Higher arts and cultural education

Higher arts and cultural education are regulated by the [\*Law on Education \(No.833-IIIQ of June 19, 2009\)\*](#), which introduced a three-cycle higher education system per the Bologna process, and the [\*State Standard and Program of Higher Education \(No.75 of April 23, 2010\)\*](#). The *draft law On Higher Education* has been included in the legislative work plan of the Science and Education Committee of the Milli Majlis (the Parliament).

The State Agency for Science and Higher Education, under the Ministry of Science and Education, supervises most higher arts and cultural education institutions, as well as higher education institutions that offer partial teaching of individual specialisations in culture.

The Baku Academy of Music, named after Uzeyir Hajibeyli, provides higher education in Instrumental Performance, Solo Singing, Conducting, Composing and Musicology.

The State University of Culture and Arts offers higher education courses in relevant specialities, such as Theatre Arts, Audio-Visual Arts, Painting, Music Arts, and Culturology.

The Azerbaijan State Academy of Fine Arts offers higher education courses in Fine arts, Art studies, Architecture and design, and Decorative and applied arts. Students are allocated individual workshops to complete their diploma work.

The Azerbaijan National Conservatory offers higher education in Mugham (singing), Ethnomusicology, Piano, Folk Instruments, Instrumental Mugham, Popular Music and Jazz, National Vocal, Conducting, Humanities, and History and Theory of Music.

The Baku Choreography Academy offers higher education in Choreography (classical dance, ballet mastery, national dance, modern dance, ballet pedagogy, and dance teaching) and Instrumental performance (garmon, drum).

Among other state higher education institutions with partial teaching of individual specialisations in culture, such can be listed:

- Azerbaijan Architecture and Construction University (provides higher education in Architecture, Design and Urban Planning);
- Baku State University (Library and information activities, Museum, archival work and preservation of monuments);
- Azerbaijan State University of Economics/UNEC (Design);
- Azerbaijan State Pedagogical University (Music teaching, Fine arts teaching);
- Azerbaijan University of Tourism and Management (Ethnography and ethnology, Culturology and its general issues);
- Karabakh University (Instrumental performance, Music teaching, Vocals, Design);
- Nakhchivan State University (Architecture);
- Nakhchivan Teachers' Institute (Library and information, Fine arts teaching, Music teaching).

Private higher education institutions with partial teaching of some specialisations in culture are Western Caspian University (Design, Architecture), Azerbaijan University (Museum, archive work and monument protection), "Odlar Yurdu" University (Design: interior, graphic, fashion designer).

#### **5.4 Out-of-school arts and cultural education**

Out-of-school arts and cultural education is delivered through children's music, art, painting, mugham, and ashig schools and centres under the Ministry of Culture. Schools provide primary and secondary education to children, adolescents and young people in the fields of music, painting and choreography; form their aesthetic taste based on the best examples of Azerbaijani folk, classical and world culture and art; create conditions for the discovery of the abilities of children, adolescents and young people and the development of their talents; are in constant contact with other educational institutions to strengthen the moral, artistic and aesthetic education of the growing generation; prepare the most talented and capable students for admission to secondary specialised and higher educational institutions in relevant specialities to continue their education. The school's education duration is 4, 5, 7 and 11 years.

Music is taught in children's music schools, painting is taught in painting schools, and music, painting, and choreography are taught in art schools. The following departments function in schools accordingly:

- On music: piano (piano-jazz, synthesiser), stringed instruments, wind and percussion instruments, folk instruments, khanende (mugham singing), vocals, pop singing, choir, as well as theory, composition and jazz-improvisation as a speciality class in 11 years of education, choir conducting, et cetera;
- On painting: painting department;
- On choreography: choreography department.

The schools have a theory department for solfeggio and music literature. This department may include music literacy and music listening, choir, harmony and other related subjects.

Music and art schools are state-funded. However, besides the state plan, the school can provide paid education in various specialities. According to data for the 2024-2025 academic year, 52,070 students are studying in 237 children's music, art, painting, mugham, and ashig schools and centres of the Ministry of Culture system, of which 50,020 (96.06%) are studying at state expense and 2,050 (3.94%) on a fee-paying basis.

The Ministry of Culture is launching the Electronic System of Art Schools ("IMES"), a digital management platform for children's music, art, painting, mugham, and ashig schools and centres. The platform will contain a database of teachers, pupils, the material and technical base, administrative staff, an automated system of courses, schedules, certificates, and journals, as well as analytical reports and analyses.

Content-related reform measures in out-of-school arts and cultural education implemented currently by the Ministry of Culture cover:

- Updating of the "The Model Regulations of Children's Schools of Music, Art and Painting";
- Preparation of a new curriculum concept and development of new curricula for specialities;
- Development of a new training module and new-generation textbooks;



- Elaborating a school development program and establishment of a teacher development mechanism;
- Developing a scientific research system, among other initiatives.

According to the Ministry of Culture's "e-Culture" Digital Development Strategy, the admission process for students to schools for the 2024/2025 academic year was conducted online for the first time. Applications for admission to schools were registered through the [MyCulture](#) single personal cabinet, using the "Electronic Admission of Students" information system, and entrance exams were conducted in a centralised manner.

Also, a test stage of the competitions for recruiting directors, deputy directors and teachers to schools was held jointly with the State Examination Centre. The registration of candidates who earned the passing score and gained the right to participate in the interview stage was carried out through the "Teacher Recruitment" information system of ["MyCulture"](#).

### **5.5 Vocational and professional training**

Vocational and professional training are regulated by the [Law on Education \(No.833-IIIQ of June 19, 2009\)](#), which introduced the concept of sub-bachelor - a professional degree awarded to graduates of higher technical vocational education and secondary specialised education, and by the [Law on Vocational Education \(No.1071-VQ of April 24, 2018\)](#), which defines the principles of state policy in the field of vocational education, the organisational, legal and economic foundations of the vocational education and training system to increase the efficiency of vocational training in the Republic of Azerbaijan and prepare competitive qualified personnel.

The State Agency for Vocational Education, under the Ministry of Science and Education, was established by the [Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan \(No.869 of April 20, 2016\)](#) to enhance the efficiency of vocational training and ensure the preparation of competitive, qualified personnel. The Agency is an executive body that provides and coordinates the implementation of state policy in vocational education and organises the activities of vocational education institutions subordinate to the Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The Azerbaijan National Conservatory has two vocational institutions:

- The College of Music under the Azerbaijan National Conservatory provides vocational education in Instrumental performance and Vocal art.
- The Sumgayit Music College, under the Azerbaijan National Conservatory, offers specialist training in sub-bachelor's degree programs in Instrumental Performance, Vocal Art, Popular Music, and Jazz Performance.

The College of Arts, under the Azerbaijan State Academy of Arts, offers vocational training in the Decorative and Applied Arts (including artistic ceramics, carpets, and weaving), Painting, Graphic Design, Sculpture, Theatre Decorative Arts, and Design (encompassing graphics, clothing, and interior design).

The Humanitarian College, under the Azerbaijan State University of Culture and Art, trains vocational specialists in Music teaching, Fine arts teaching, Library and information provision,

Museum work and preservation of monuments, Instrumental performance (piano, violin), Artistic and creative work, and other related fields.

The College of Arts under the Baku Choreographic Academy offers vocational education in Choreography, Instrumental Performance, Folk instrument playing, Dance, and music teaching.

Agdam Music College trains vocational specialists in Instrumental performance, Mugham (Khanende) singing, Vocal art, Ashig art, and the Performance of folk instruments.

Nakhchivan Music College trains vocational specialists in Music teaching, Library and information provision, Instrumental performance, Garmon, Khanende (Mugham singing), Vocal art, Choir conducting, Music theory, Choreography, Folk musical instrument performance, and Ashiq art.

Among other vocational and professional training institutions with partial teaching of individual specialisations in culture, such can be listed:

- Construction College under the Azerbaijan University of Architecture and Construction (trains specialists in Fine arts teaching and Design);
- Agjabadi Pedagogical College (Music teaching, Fine arts teaching);
- Agdash State Humanitarian College (Fine arts teaching);
- Astara Pedagogical College (Fine arts teaching, Instrumental performance, Music theory, Folk instrument performance);
- College of Economics and Humanities under Baku State University (Library and information support; Archival work and chancery work);
- Social and Agrarian-Technological College under Lankaran State University (Fine arts teaching, Instrumental performance, Khanende (Mugham singing), Choir conducting, Music theory, Folk instrument performance, Archival work and chancery work, Museum work and preservation of monuments);
- Mingachevir Tourism College (Museum work and preservation of monuments);
- Sabirabad State Socio-Economic College (Library Information Provision);
- Shusha Humanitarian College (Fine arts teaching, Library and information provision, Instrumental performance, Khanende (Mugham singing), Music theory, Folk instrument performance, and Choir conducting).

## 6. Cultural participation and consumption

### 6.1 Policies and programmes

Public initiatives and programmes to promote cultural participation and attendance in the country have constitutional and legislative foundations. The [\*Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan \(No.00 of November 12, 1995\)\*](#) guarantees everyone's right to participate in cultural life and use cultural institutions and values. Article 14 ("The right to use cultural institutions and cultural values") of the [\*Law on Culture \(No.506-IVQ of 21 December 2012\)\*](#) establishes that the state guarantees the right to use cultural institutions and cultural values in the Republic of Azerbaijan. The state implements projects aimed at simplifying the population's access to cultural institutions and spaces, as well as initiatives that stimulate the cultural activities of children and youth and their enjoyment of cultural resources through economic, social, legal, scientific-technical, and modern technological measures to ensure this right. The state ensures preferential use of cultural values for low-income populations, persons with disabilities, and war veterans.

The [\*Rules on preferential use of cultural values by low-income populations, persons with disabilities, and war veterans\*](#) were approved by the Cabinet of Ministers' Decision No. 287, dated August 20, 2015. The preferential use of cultural values for non-commercial purposes is carried out on state and municipal property, as well as in the territories of state reserves under the Ministry of Culture, the State Tourism Agency, the Administration of State Historical-Architectural Reserve "Icherisheher", and the Shusha City State Reserve Department. All of it is provided for members of low-income families, people with disabilities and war veterans free of charge and without consent. Preferential use by these populations of cultural values protected or displayed in privately owned cultural institutions is foreseen by mutual agreement.

The use of cultural resources in state- and municipal-owned cultural institutions must be carried out in accordance with their historical and artistic purposes; it is not permitted to utilise cultural values in a manner incompatible with their historical and artistic significance. Copying or public communication of works of architecture, photography, and fine arts in places permanently open to the public is permitted by the [\*Law on Copyright and Related Rights \(No.115-IQ of June 5, 1996\)\*](#). The exception applies in cases where the description of the work is the primary object of reproduction or public communication or where a copy of the work is used for commercial purposes without the author's or other copyright holder's consent and payment of royalties.

The Ministry of Culture runs special programmes to broaden and promote participation in cultural life for different social strata. Besides the privileged categories of the population, such as the families of martyrs, pensioners, orphans, secondary school pupils, and high school students, free and favourable access to museums, reserves, and monuments is allowed for all visitors on state official holidays and international museums, historical monuments, music, and other relevant days.

Further improvement of accessibility and inclusiveness of cultural values is scheduled in the *draft "Azerbaijani Culture - 2040" Concept of the Republic of Azerbaijan*, within the framework of which it is provided to establish a permanent forum, "Culture for All", to expand sustainable

social relations, cooperation and dialogue between state bodies and society in the field of culture, and to regularly hold inclusive forums and other educational events dedicated to current topics in various regions; implementation of support programs for the creation of new and high-quality cultural products and cultural assets by young people; implementation of activities to ensure intergenerational dialogue in every field of culture; creating ecosystems for collaboration between creative and modern digital technology experts and for testing and promoting the results of their creativity; implementing sustainable programs, while ensuring inclusion, to enable children, the elderly, people with disabilities and other vulnerable social categories to discover their talents and demonstrate their creative potential; improving service quality, ensuring accessibility and inclusion through the implementation of digital and innovative solutions in the field of cultural services.

## **6.2 Trends and figures in cultural participation**

The primary developmental trends between 2015, 2019 (the pre-pandemic year), and 2023 reveal significant variations in the number of attendees (participants) across selected fields of culture. During these years, there was a sharp increase in cinema attendance, almost threefold. The data on concert attendees demonstrates a fairly noticeable rise, from 4.2% of the population in 2015 to 4.97% in 2023. At the same time, there was a rather noticeable decrease in the audience's interest in the theatrical sphere over the compared years, from 7% to 4.25% of the population. The percentage of library visitors has been slowly declining, and as a result, libraries moved to second place in visits within the cultural sector, with a rate of 24.34% in 2023.

Meanwhile, museums, second in terms of visits in the cultural sector (26.9% of the population in 2015), emerged as the top destination in 2023 despite a slight decline to 25%. The indicators for pupils in children's music, art and painting schools show a noticeable decreasing trend over these years; an increase in the share of paid education can explain this trend. Considering the indicated trends, it should still be noted that the total figures in the number of spectators and visitors in state cultural institutions demonstrate a stable tendency to growth: from 4,921.6 thousand persons in 2022 to 5,406.2 thousand in 2023 and 6,217.1 thousand in 2024, which the increasing attention of the state can explain to issues of cultural participation.

**Table 4: Number of attendees (participants) of selected cultural activities in the Republic of Azerbaijan (in % of the population, over three selected years)**

Field	2015	2019	2023
Theatre	7%	6,4%	4.25%
Concerts	4.2%	4.9%	4.97%
Libraries	27.2%	25.9%	24.34%
Museums	26.9%	33.2%	25%
Cultural centres (participants)	0.7%	0.4%	0.3%
Pupils in child music, art and painting schools	0.7%	0.6%	0.55%
Cinema	6.2%	16.3%	18.66%

Source: <https://www.stat.gov.az/source/education/?lang=en>

### 6.3 Trends and figures in household expenditure

**Table 5: Household expenditure by recreation and cultural purpose, 2021 and 2023**

Items (Field/Domain)	Household expenditure (in million EUR and percentages)				Average per capita expenditure (EUR)	
	2021	%	2023	%	2021	2023
<b>Total household expenditure</b>	<b>19 439.1</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>22 743.5</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1 938.8</b>	<b>2 245,8</b>
<b>Of which:</b>						
<b>recreation and cultural services</b>	<b>718.1</b>	<b>3.69 %</b>	<b>888.6</b>	<b>3.91 %</b>	<b>71.6</b>	<b>87.7</b>

Sources: [https://www.stat.gov.az/source/budget\\_households/?lang=en](https://www.stat.gov.az/source/budget_households/?lang=en),  
<https://www.stat.gov.az/source/demography/?lang=en>

## 6.4 Culture and civil society

The Ministry of Culture supports amateur arts and fosters people's creativity through a network of cultural houses, clubs, and relevant centres. To a small extent, some clubs are associated with the State Oil Company (SOCAR), the Confederation of Trade Unions, and other organisations. According to state statistics, as of the end of 2023, the total number of clubs funded by the state stands at 2,058, comprising 323 in urban areas and 1,735 in rural regions. The overall number of seats in the auditoriums and lecture halls of these clubs totals 299,570, which equates to 30 per 1,000 of the population.

Cultural clubs and houses of culture provide the background and conditions for club circles, amateur art groups and unions, interest clubs, amateur associations, art circles and collectives, technical creativity courses and classes, as well as children's circles and collectives. Clubs supported by the Ministry of Culture offered 3,569 different types of cultural leisure activities, with almost 30,000 active participants involved. These amounts encompass 1,435 child hobby groups and collectives, with a total of up to 10,500 children participating. Events organised in the fields of people's creativity and intangible cultural heritage at club-type cultural institutions encompass amateur concerts, performances, spectacles, games, festivals, competitions, fairs, exhibitions, excursions, tours, and conferences, seminars.

Over the last decade, the Ministry of Culture has initiated the reorganisation of the cultural houses and community cultural clubs' system, aiming to broaden social participation in cultural life under current economic circumstances. This initiative involved setting aside non-working functions and developing new forms, serving as infrastructural units for intangible cultural heritage. Established city and town centres of culture, along with their local lore, folklore, and artisanal branches, serve this idea by attracting relevant masters, performers, collectives, researchers, NGOs, and private structures.

The technical conditions of most club buildings are not sufficiently satisfactory. The number of club buildings requiring major repairs stands at 999, which is 45.7% of the total, while the number of club buildings in a state of emergency amounts to 94, or 4.3%. The club staff's educational attainment is also unsatisfactory. Of the total number of cultural and educational employees in clubs, 5,195 people, only 9.0% hold higher education in culture and art, 9.7% have higher education in fields other than culture and art, and 21.3% have a secondary specialised education in culture and art.

A social survey was conducted in February 2024 to effectively organise activities related to forming a new national cultural model, "Culture for All," proposed by the *draft "Azerbaijani Culture—2040" Concept of the Republic of Azerbaijan*. The survey identified the challenges facing the state in the cultural sector and ensured public participation in developing the Concept. According to the survey results, most respondents (78%) identify culture with art. Under "national and spiritual values", 69% of respondents understand customs and traditions, 64% understand history and culture, and 43% understand moral rules. The most visited cultural institutions and events, according to respondents, were libraries (29%), concerts (16%), and museums (15%). The least visited were reserves (only 3%), exhibitions (6%), theatres (11%), and others (7%). 54% of respondents were satisfied with the demonstrated creative examples, 16% were unsatisfied, and another 16% considered them poorly consistent with modern requirements. The vast majority of respondents - 68% - expressed a



desire to engage in creativity, and only 1% thought it a waste of time. Respondents considered the following measures necessary for the development of culture: improving the professionalism of employees (21%), increasing funds allocated to the cultural sector (20%), developing infrastructure and making services more accessible (17%), stimulating creativity and innovation (12%), and cooperation with other countries (12%), expanding public-private partnerships (11%). 42% of respondents positively assessed the international promotion of Azerbaijani culture, 32% considered it satisfactory, 11% thought it unsatisfactory, and 15% were unaware of it.

## 7. Financing and support

### 7.1 Public funding

#### 7.1.1 INDICATORS

The revenues of the state budget of the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2024 were approved at 36 388 000 000 AZN, while the expenditures were approved at 39 742 300 000 AZN by the [\*Law On the State Budget of the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2024 \(No.1028-VIQ of December 5, 2023\)\*](#). Compared with similar indicators for 2021, state budget revenues increased by 143.11%, and state budget expenditures increased by 139.24%.

In 2024, the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was 126.3 billion AZN, representing a 135.95% increase from 2021. In 2024, GDP per capita was equal to 12 382.5 AZN, which is 133.59% more than the same indicator in 2021.

These macroeconomic indicators demonstrate the country's economy's continued progressive growth, which is naturally reflected in the macro indicators of public cultural expenditure. If the total public cultural expenditure allocated for the use of the Ministry of Culture in 2021 was AZN 379 326 086.0 (EUR 189 663 043.0), then in 2024, it was already AZN 538 438 646.5 (EUR 291 047 917.0), which is 141.95% more in AZN and 153.46% more in EUR equivalent (the strengthening of the AZN exchange rate over this period explains the difference in percentage in AZN and EUR equivalent).

Public culture expenditures at all levels of government per capita in 2024 were AZN 52.89 (EUR 28.59), significantly exceeding the 2021 figure of AZN 37.83 (EUR 18.92).

Public culture expenditure as a percentage of the GDP in 2024 was 0.43% (compared to 0.41% in 2021).

In 2024, public culture expenditures accounted for 1.35% of total public spending, compared to 1.33% in 2021.

Sources:

- The Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On the State Budget of the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2024" (No.1028-VIQ of December 5, 2023), <https://e-qanun.az/framework/55872>;
- The Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On the State Budget of the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2021" (No.233-VIQ of December 29, 2020), <https://e-qanun.az/framework/46590>;
- The Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On several issues related to the implementation of the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan No. 1028-VIQ dated December 5, 2023 "On the State Budget of the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2024" (No.2424 of December 26, 2023), <https://e-qanun.az/framework/55892>;
- The Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On several issues related to the implementation of the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On the State Budget of the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2021" (No.1241 of December 30, 2020), <https://e-qanun.az/framework/46614>;

- The State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan (<https://www.stat.gov.az/news/index.php?lang=en&id=5100> <https://www.stat.gov.az/news/index.php?lang=en&id=6145>).

### 7.1.2 EXPENDITURE ON THE GOVERNMENT LEVEL (THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE)

It should be noted that due to the decentralised budgetary expenditure on culture, most public funds are distributed locally. Moreover, the general trend is that the percentage changes over the years in favour of the regions. For example, in 2015, this ratio was 52.1% versus 47.9% in favour of the local budget and in 2024, this ratio was already 63.3% against 36.7% in favour of the regional budget.

**Table 6: Public cultural expenditure by the level of government, 2024**

Level of government	Total expenditure in national currency (AZN)	Total expenditure in EUR	% share of total
Central	197 549 966.5	106 783 765.7	36.7%
Regional	340 888 680.0	184 264 151.3	63.3%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>538 438 646.5</b>	<b>291 047 917.0</b>	<b>100%</b>

Sources:

- The Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On several issues related to the implementation of the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan No. 1028-VIQ dated December 5, 2023 "On the State Budget of the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2024" (No.2424 of December 26, 2023), <https://e-qanun.az/framework/55892>;
- The Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On several issues related to the implementation of the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On the State Budget of the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2021" (No.1241 of December 30, 2020), <https://e-qanun.az/framework/46614>.

The following table presents the figures for public cultural expenditures by level of government for 2021 and 2024, allowing for a trend analysis. Almost all indicators have grown significantly over the past few years, clearly demonstrating the general trend towards increasing budgetary attention to culture on the part of the state. Following the increase in total public cultural expenditures by 141.95%, regional expenditures grew by 134.83%, and central expenditures by more than one and a half times, at 156.16%.

**Table 7: Comparison of public cultural expenditures by the level of government for 2021 and 2024**

Level of government	Total expenditure in 2021 (AZN)	Total expenditure in 2024 (AZN)	Trend in %
Central	126 504 173.0	197 549 966.5	↑ 156.16%
Regional	252 821 913.0	340 888 680.0	↑ 134.83%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>379 326 086.0</b>	<b>538 438 646.5</b>	<b>↑ 141.95%</b>

Sources:

- The Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On several issues related to the implementation of the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan No. 1028-VIQ dated December 5, 2023 ", On the State Budget of the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2024" (No.2424 of December 26, 2023), <https://e-qanun.az/framework/55892>
- The Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On several issues related to the implementation of the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On the State Budget of the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2021" (No.1241 of December 30, 2020), <https://e-qanun.az/framework/46614>

### 7.1.3 EXPENDITURE PER SECTOR (THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE)

Expenditures in the cultural sectors generally show an upward trend in connection with the country's overall economic development and the progressive increase in cultural budget allocations. In this regard, it should be noted that out of a total budgetary allocation of 538,438,646.5 AZN (100%), 404,721,143.0 AZN is allocated to wages (75.2%), 130,927,503.5 AZN to operating expenses (24.3%), and 2,790,000.0 AZN to investment expenses (0.5%).

**Table 8: Direct state cultural expenditure and transfers (central level): by sector, 2024, in 1000 of national currency (AZN)**

Field/Domain/Sub-domain	TOTAL		of which: <b>Direct expenditure (of government or its agencies)</b>	of which: <b>Transfers to other levels of government</b>
	in 1000 AZN	in %		
<b>I. Cultural Heritage</b>				
<i>Historical Monuments (State Service for the Protection, Development and Restoration of Cultural Heritage under the Ministry of Culture)</i>	4 905.7	0.91%	4 905.7	-
<i>National Museum of History of Azerbaijan, National Museum of Azerbaijani Literature and Huseyn Javid’s House-Museum</i>	6 624.5	1.23%	6 624.5	-
<i>Other museums and reserves</i>	37 470.9	6.96%	16 786.8	20 684.1
<i>Azerbaijan National Library named after M.F.Akhundzadeh</i>	7 832.7	1.45%	7 832.7	-
<i>Other libraries</i>	60 039.6	11.15%	1 945.4	58 094.2
<i>Intangible Heritage / Folk Culture</i>	52 160.8	9.69%	-	52 160.8
<b>II. Performing Arts</b>				
<i>Theatre and concert facilities</i>	53 899.9	10.01%	51 985.1	1 914.8
<i>International Mugham Centre</i>	2 108.5	0.39%	2 108.5	-
<b>III. Audio-visual and Multimedia (audiovisual və multimedia)</b>				
<i>Cinema ("Cinema Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan",public legal entity of the Ministry of Culture)</i>	10 500.0	1.95%	10 500.0	-
<i>Expenses related to the preparation &amp; broadcasting of the promotion of cultural programs</i>	1 004.0	0.19%	1 004.0	-
<b>IV. Interdisciplinary</b>				
<i>Assistance to public associations</i>	7 438.3	1.38%	7 438.3	-
<i>Awarding scholarships and awards to artists</i>	1 494.0	0.28%	1 494.0	-
<i>Cultural Relations Abroad</i>	6 684.0	1.24%	6 684.0	-
<i>Cultural centres in foreign countries</i>	9 352.6	1.74%	9 352.6	-
<i>Administration</i>	11 740.8	2.18%	7 367.5	4 373.3
<i>Cultural Education</i>	205 482.8	38.16%	4 210.7	201 272.1
<b>V. Not covered by domains I-IV</b>				
<i>Centralised costs</i>	39 942.3	7.42%	39 942.3	-
<i>Investment costs</i>	2 790.0	0.52%	2 790.0	-
<i>Other expenses</i>	16 967.2	3.15%	14 577.8	2 389.4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>538 438.6</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>197 549.9</b>	<b>340 888.7</b>

Source: The Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On several issues related to the implementation of the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan No. 1028-VIQ dated December 5, 2023 "On the State Budget of the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2024" (No.2424 of December 26, 2023, <https://e-qanun.az/framework/55892>)

## 7.2 Support programmes

### 7.2.1 STRATEGIES, PROGRAMMES AND OTHER FORMS OF SUPPORT

The government's approach to supporting artistic and creative workers in the Republic of Azerbaijan, as outlined by its cultural policy actors, is diversified and comprehensive at both the legislative and executive levels. General legislation, including social security, labour laws, and other relevant regulatory acts, build economic and social frameworks to support cultural and creative workers. Centralised and local state budgets support cultural creativity and artists in the country by providing the necessary conditions for maintaining cultural institutions, salaries, honoraria, and retirement and health benefits. The state supports creativity by involving artists in implementing state development strategies, programs, and projects and by supporting private projects and initiatives. Holding festivals and competitions in various cultural spheres for professionals (theatre, music, visual arts, etc.), sending delegations to international events, and providing free primary, secondary, and high special education should also be considered.

A very effective mechanism to directly support artists is the system of personal grants, awards, and scholarships implemented through decrees of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, such as [\*On the establishment of personal pension of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan \(No.715 of June 11, 2002\)\*](#), [\*On the establishment of the prizes of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan for artists \(No.707 of May 28, 2002\)\*](#), [\*On honorary titles of the Republic of Azerbaijan \(No.706 of May 22, 1998\)\*](#), [\*On the State Care for Young Talents in Azerbaijan \(No. 464 of June 22, 1996\)\*](#), [\*On Special Scholarship Fund to Support the Creative Activities of Writers, Artists and Composers of the Older and Younger Generations \(No.612 of August 6, 2007\)\*](#), as well as regular orders on awarding prominent figures of culture and art with high state awards comprising of medals, orders, honorary diplomas and state prizes.

Targeted support for particular culture and art forms is an approved approach to improving cultural financing; examples are the orders of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, such as those concerning the Azerbaijan State Symphony Orchestra named after Uzeyir Hajibeyli, the Azerbaijan State Choir Capella, the Ballet troupe of Azerbaijan State Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre, the Azerbaijan State Dance Ensemble, the Azerbaijan State Chamber Orchestra named after Gara Garayev, the Azerbaijan State Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre, the Azerbaijan State Musical Comedy Theatre, etc.

The legislative basis of the state grant support system, including in the field of culture, is represented by the [\*Law on Grants \(No.483-IQ of April 17, 1998\)\*](#), which regulates the economic and legal relations related to the receipt and use of grants. The law defines grants as assistance to develop and implement humanitarian, social, and ecological projects in various fields, including education, health, culture, legal advice, information, publishing, sports, scientific research, and other related areas. Other programmes essential for the state and public may also receive grants. The Agency for State Support to Non-Governmental Organizations of the Republic of Azerbaijan supports non-governmental organisations, including cultural ones. It organises grant competitions and evaluates initiatives, programs, and projects per the [\*Rules for Registration of Grant Agreements \(Decisions\) \(No.216, June 5, 2015\)\*](#).



In addition, the Ministry of Culture also has the right to issue grants to NGOs by the [\*List of organisations financed from the state budget of the Republic of Azerbaijan and capable of providing grants to legal entities and individuals of the Republic of Azerbaijan by their areas of activity \(No.654 of October 21, 2015\)\*](#), in connection with which it holds annual grant competitions for NGOs in the field of culture.

Additionally, the state financially supports the creative unions of Azerbaijani composers, artists, writers, architects, ashigs, cinematographers, and theatre workers through the Ministry of Culture.

### 7.2.2 ARTIST'S FUNDS

The Special Scholarship Foundation was established according to the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan [\*On Special Scholarship Fund to Support the Creative Activities of Writers, Artists and Composers of the Older and Younger Generations \(No.612 of August 6, 2007\)\*](#) to ensure the implementation of the Orders of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan *On measures to improve the creative conditions of members of the Azerbaijan Writers' Union (No.2023 of March 12, 2007)*, *On measures to improve the creative conditions of members of the Azerbaijan Artists' Union (No.2024 of March 12, 2007)*, and *On measures to improve the creative conditions of members of the Azerbaijan Composers' Union (No.2025 of March 12, 2007)*. The Special Scholarship Foundation funds are directed to finance special scholarships for writers, artists, and composers of both older and younger generations, aiming to enhance state care for artists and to create more favourable conditions for the development of art in the country. The Special Scholarship Foundation is formed at the expense of the state budget and envisaged in the centralised expenditures of the Ministry of Culture.

The *Decree on Special Scholarship Fund* determines the number, amount and duration of special scholarships as follows:

- For the older generation, AZN 300 (three hundred manats) per month for one year, 50 scholarships for writers, 50 for artists and 30 for composers;
- For the younger generation, AZN 200 (two hundred manats) per month for one year, with 20 scholarships for writers, 20 for artists, and 10 for composers.

According to Rules for the use of a special scholarship fund to ensure the creative activities of writers, artists and composers of the older and younger generation" approved by the same Decree and which determines the mechanism for using the funds of the special scholarship fund, special scholarship holders are selected by the Azerbaijan Writers' Union, the Azerbaijan Artists' Union, and the Azerbaijan Composers' Union, respectively, from among the older and younger generations of writers, artists, and composers who are members of the organisation by decision of their general meetings. Thus, the Azerbaijan Writers' Union, the Azerbaijan Artists' Union, and the Azerbaijan Composers' Union submit the list of special scholarship recipients, approved by the decision of their general meetings, to the Ministry of Culture by March 1 every year. The list for subsequent years is formed based on the results of the one-year activity of special scholarship recipients.

### 7.2.3 GRANTS, AWARDS, SCHOLARSHIPS

The Republic of Azerbaijan has an impressive landscape of grants, awards, and scholarships for artists. Thus, to evaluate the services of Azerbaijani literary and artistic figures, as well as

those who have made significant contributions to science, education, culture, economy, public administration and other fields of country, and to improve their social status, five hundred personal scholarships of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan were established in the amount of 1,500 (one thousand five hundred) manats each following the Decree [\*On the establishment of personal pension of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan \(No.715 of June 11, 2002\)\*](#).

To strengthen state care for artists and create more favourable conditions for the development of performing arts in the Republic of Azerbaijan, one hundred and fifty prizes of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan for 500 manats per month each for leading artists (determined in the first quarter of each year) engaged in stage activities were established by the Decree [\*On the establishment of the prizes of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan for artists \(No.707 of May 28, 2002\)\*](#).

The Decree [\*On honorary titles of the Republic of Azerbaijan \(No.706 of May 22, 1998\)\*](#) established the honorary titles of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the fields of culture, literature, science, education, health, physical education and sports, journalism, engineering, as well as civil service, law, agriculture and civil aviation. The sphere of culture and literature includes such honorary titles as "People's Writer", "People's Poet", "People's Actor", "People's Artist", "Honoured Art Worker", "Honoured Actor", "Honoured Artist", "Honoured Cultural Worker" and "Honoured Architect". According to the [\*Regulations on Honorary Titles of the Republic of Azerbaijan \(No.130 of May 14, 1999\)\*](#), honorary titles are awarded for exceptional services in culture and literature, outstanding professional achievements, and active participation in public life. Individuals awarded the honorary title of the Republic of Azerbaijan are entitled to the privileges established by law. In addition, they are awarded lifelong stipends according to the Decree [\*On Granting Monthly Scholarships for Honorary Titles \(No.878 of July 4, 2005\)\*](#). According to the 2024 statistics, 252 persons are paid a monthly scholarship of 200 manats for the honorary title "People's", and 4,539 persons receive a monthly pension of 150 manats for the title "Honoured".

Prominent figures of culture and art are awarded high state awards on a regular basis: thus, in 2023-2024, two persons were awarded the "Glory" Order, two persons were awarded the "Labour" Order, three persons were awarded the "Honour" Order, 32 persons were awarded the "100th Anniversary of Heydar Aliyev (1923-2023)" jubilee medal, five persons were awarded the Honorary Diploma of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and one person was awarded the State Prize.

The "Golden Book" of young talents of Azerbaijan, the "Young Talents Foundation", and a special monthly scholarship of AZN 400 was established by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan [\*On the State Care for Young Talents in Azerbaijan \(No.464 of June 22, 1996\)\*](#). The renewed [\*Regulations on the 'Golden Book' and special scholarships for young talents \(No.2368 November 30, 2023\)\*](#) define that The Golden Book and Scholarship were established to provide citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan aged 10 to 25 with exceptional abilities in the field of culture with the personal patronage of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan and state care for developing their creative potential. The scholarship is awarded to the individual for three years from the date their name is entered in the Golden Book and is disbursed monthly in the amount of 400 AZN until they reach the age of 25.

The Ministry of Culture also announces grant competitions for non-governmental organisations. Thus, in 2023-2024, 320 projects were submitted to the competitions, of which 52 were selected and awarded grants totalling AZN 620,000.0 (EUR 337,025.6). The projects supported within the framework of grant competitions covered the protection of cultural heritage and its transmission to future generations, support for cultural and creative industries, the return of culture to the territories liberated from occupation, the development of volunteerism in the field of culture, the study, research, and promotion of the historical and cultural heritage of Western Azerbaijan, support for archival heritage, international promotion of Azerbaijani culture, cultural development of people and society, and other topics.

#### 7.2.4 SUPPORT TO PROFESSIONAL ARTISTS'

Professional creative unions currently obtain their centralised funds and material-technical bases, including buildings, from the state system but administer material, social and professional matters themselves without state interference. Central and local authorities provide different organisational and financial support to creative unions, involving their members in national and international events and regularly purchasing products of their art and creativity. In particular, special funds from the state budget are intended to support professional creative unions and other non-governmental organisations through the Ministry of Culture.

For example, AZN 7,438,312 was sent from the state budget of 2024 to support such organisations as:

- The Azerbaijan Composers' Union;
- The Azerbaijan Artists' Union;
- The Azerbaijan Writers' Union;
- The Azerbaijan Architects' Union;
- The Azerbaijan Ashiq Union;
- The Azerbaijan Cinematographers' Union;
- The Azerbaijan Theatre Workers' Union;
- The Azerbaijan Red Crescent Society;
- The "Azerbaijan World" International Relations Centre;
- The Azerbaijan Elders' Council;
- The Azerbaijan Republic Organization of War, Labour and Armed Forces Veterans;
- The Azerbaijan Children's Fund.

In this regard, it should be noted that the volume of financial support for professional creative unions and other non-governmental organisations is growing in correlation to the overall development of the Azerbaijani state. Thus, in 2020, the amount of similar support was 5,523,650 manats.

The state seriously considers providing financial support to professional creative unions and other non-governmental organisations and does not allow delays in transferring allocated budgetary funds. For instance, by the relevant paragraph of the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan [\*On several issues related to the implementation of the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan No. 1028-VIQ dated December 5, 2023, "On the State Budget of the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2024 \(No.2424 dated December 26, 2023\)\*](#), the Ministry of Culture

must distribute the funds provided for in the subsection on Financial Assistance to Non-Governmental Organizations of this Decree among the relevant organisations within 20 days by coordinating with the Ministry of Finance and ensure payments following the distribution. This state approach and requirement is implemented as a normative practice annually.

### **7.3 Private funding**

Attracting alternative financing sources (sponsors, supporters, etc.) and implementing up-to-date marketing to improve the system of paid cultural services are key components of the state's strategy for diversifying funding sources for cultural activities and policies.

One of the priority areas is attracting additional financial resources for repairing and restoring monuments in a state of emergency, as well as implementing the Public-Private Partnership model to carry out the planned works. For instance, the State Service for the Protection, Development, and Restoration of Cultural Heritage, under the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Azerbaijan, cooperates with relevant private sector representatives in various directions. Necessary measures are being taken to involve the private sector in restoring monuments in different regions of the country. Thus, the historical monument, "Seminary Building," located in the Gazakh district, was repaired and restored at the expense of "PMD Projects" LLC, and the Gazakh Centre of ADA University's activities were organised there.

To take advantage of the opportunities for public-private partnership in the field of protection, restoration and effective use of our cultural heritage after restoration and to hold joint discussions with entrepreneurs, the State Service has initiated cooperation with the National Confederation of Entrepreneurs (Employers) Organizations of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and initially, information on 52 monuments was provided.

Currently, necessary work is being carried out to restore some monuments with the financial support of the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency Baku Program Coordination Office, the International Turkic Culture and Heritage Foundation, the Public Union of Turkish and Azerbaijani Businessmen and Industrialists, and the [Karabakh Revival Fund](#). Private sector representatives have already submitted official applications, or letters of intent, to the State Service to restore certain monuments.

Another direction in this sphere is cooperation with individuals and legal entities that own or use monuments. In 2023-2024, 290 protection agreements were concluded with individuals and legal entities that own or use monuments in the Republic's territory. Additionally, 46 projects regarding the repair and restoration of monuments in private ownership, at their owners' expense, were received from their users.

Many activities in the arts and culture, including festivals, concerts, and fairs, both international and local, attract a significant share of sponsorship from the private sector. Furthermore, funds, banks, and other financial institutions operating in the country provide considerable subsidies to assist and promote the mobility of artists and artworks. However, private funding statistics are unavailable as studies, surveys, and similar research on private funding for culture have not yet been conducted.

Paid cultural services, namely the sums earned by cultural organisations, e.g., fees charged for paid cultural services provided by museums, exhibition halls, and libraries, are another means by which public cultural institutions can self-finance, and this method is becoming

increasingly important. The state cultural institutions, which are subordinated to the Ministry of Culture, provided paid cultural services for AZN 4.252 million in 2024, two and a half times more than in 2022 (AZN 1.686 million). Traditionally, the leading providers of paid cultural services have been museums, educational institutions, cultural centers, and clubs. However, these sums are still insignificant, accounting for less than 1% of public expenditure on culture, the arts, and monument conservation.

## Sources and links

### Key documents on cultural policy

[The Cultural Policy Profile](#)

[Unified electronic database of legal acts](#)

[The Baku Process](#)

[Azerbaijani Samples Inscribed on the Intangible Cultural Heritage Lists of UNESCO](#)

[Azerbaijani Sites Inscribed on the World Heritage List of UNESCO](#)

### Key organisations and portals

#### Cultural policy making bodies

[The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan](#)

[The Milli Majlis of the Republic of Azerbaijan](#)

[The Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan](#)

[The Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Azerbaijan](#)

[The Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan](#)

[The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan](#)

[The Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Azerbaijan](#)

[The Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Azerbaijan](#)

[The Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Azerbaijan](#)

[The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Population of the Republic of Azerbaijan](#)

[The Ministry of Digital Development and Transport of the Republic of Azerbaijan](#)

[The Ministry of Youth and Sport of the Republic of Azerbaijan](#)

[The Commissioner for Human Rights \(Ombudsman\) of the Republic of Azerbaijan](#)

[The State Committee on Work with Diaspora of the Republic of Azerbaijan](#)

[The State Committee for Urban Planning and Architecture of the Republic of Azerbaijan](#)

[The Intellectual Property Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan](#)

[The State Tourism Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan](#)

[The Media Development Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan](#)

[The State Service for Protection, Development and Restoration of Cultural Heritage under the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Azerbaijan](#)

[The Cinema Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan \(ARKA\) under the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Azerbaijan](#)

[The Audiovisual Council of the Republic of Azerbaijan](#)

[The Press Council of Azerbaijan](#)



[The Baku International Multiculturalism Centre](#)

[The State Examination Centre of the Republic of Azerbaijan](#)

[The Azerbaijan Trade Union Confederation](#)

[The "Azerkhalcha" Open Joint Stock Company](#)

[The State Agency for Public Service and Social Innovations under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan \(ASAN\)](#)

[The Sustainable and Operational Social Security Agency \(DOST Agency\)](#)

### **Grant-giving bodies**

[The Heydar Aliyev Foundation](#)

[The Karabakh Revival Fund](#)

[The Agency of State Support to Non-Governmental Organisations of the Republic of Azerbaijan  
ABAD \(Facilitated Support to Family Business\)](#)

[The Small and Medium Business Development Agency \(KOBİA\)](#)

### **Cultural research and statistics**

[Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences](#)

[The State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan](#)

[The National Archives of the Republic of Azerbaijan](#)

[The Scientific-Methodological and Advanced Training Center for Culture under the Ministry of  
Culture of the Republic of Azerbaijan](#)

### **Culture / arts portals**

[The Heydar Aliyev Centre](#)

[The National Museum of History of Azerbaijan](#)

[The Azerbaijan National Museum of Art](#)

[The Azerbaijan National Carpet Museum](#)

[The Baku Museum of Modern Art](#)

[The Azerbaijan National Library](#)

[The Baku Media Center](#)

[YARAT Contemporary Art Space](#)

[The International Mugham Centre](#)

[The Gobustan National Historical-Artistic Preserve](#)

[The Administration of the State Historical-Architectural Reserve "Icherisheher"](#)

[The Shusha City State Reserve Department](#)

[The Azerbaijan State Art Gallery](#)

**Creative Unions**

[The Azerbaijan Writers' Union](#)

[The Azerbaijan Composers' Union](#)

[The Azerbaijan Architects' Union](#)

[The Azerbaijan Cinematographers' Union](#)

[The Azerbaijan Artists' Union](#)

[The Azerbaijan Theatre Workers' Union](#)

[The Azerbaijan Ashiq Union](#)

**Higher education institutions in the field of culture**

[The Baku Academy of Music](#)

[The Baku Choreography Academy](#)

[The State University of Culture and the Arts](#)

[The Azerbaijan National Music Academy](#)

[The Azerbaijan State Academy of Fine Arts](#)