

Country Profile

Bulgaria

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1. Cultural policy system

1.1. Objectives, main features and background

The Ministry of Culture is charged with the task of conducting cultural policies, preserving culture and cultural heritage, and developing partnerships in the cultural field. According to the *Law on the Protection and Development of Culture*, the Council of Ministers, on a proposal from the Minister of Culture, adopts a *National Strategy for the Development of Culture* for a period of ten years. In March 2019, a *Draft Strategy for the Development of the Bulgarian Culture by 2029* was published, whose strategic goals are the preservation of cultural memory and historical heritage, the search for an effective mechanism for financing from the state and municipal budgets, as well as attracting alternative financial sources and the digitalisation of cultural content. This project has not yet been officially approved or secured. In scope, culture is limited to only nine areas covered by the Ministry of Culture – cultural heritage, visual arts, performing arts, books, reading and libraries, amateur arts, audio vision and media, copyright and related arts, international cultural heritage, culture and education.

Since 2018, one of the objectives of the Ministry of Culture appears to be long-term policy to support culture as a national priority. However, this objective has not been met yet as of end 2019.

In recent years, joint financing – by the national and municipal budget – of theatres, opera houses and philharmonic orchestras has been a definite achievement. However, due to the permanent financial problems of the municipalities, it has been difficult to reach agreements with the Ministry of Culture on their contributions, and municipalities do not always keep their part of the deal. That is why developing local cultural policies and strategies still remains a good intention rather than a fact.

Cinema and literature have no state-subsidised structures; state subsidies are rather granted to individual projects on the basis of competitive bidding. It is hard to define an overall model of cultural policy applicable to the sector in Bulgaria. The observations registered after 1989 tend to reveal an eclectic approach and pragmatic decisions, according to the aims of each governmental programme, but not an overall vision characterised by a long term development strategy.

Main features

In the course of Bulgaria's transition to a democracy and market economy, a series of cultural reforms have been conducted in the past ten years, with the following objectives:

- decentralisation of the administration and financing of culture;
- freedom of action and formation of market-oriented attitudes of cultural institutions and artists;
- amendments to cultural legislation designed to meet the new socio-economic challenges;
- establishment of an administrative environment facilitating cultural development and European integration;
- guaranteeing the equality of state, municipal and private cultural institutions; and

- strengthening the role of the non-governmental sector. Decentralisation, regarded as the top priority at the start of transition, has remained a controversial issue both for cultural circles and the general public. At present, there are three sources of conflict: 1) central government and the legislature which, on the one hand, are decentralising the financing and administration of cultural institutions while, on the other, retaining partial control over the latter; 2) local government, which is eager for greater autonomy, but still prefers most of the responsibilities for and financing of culture to be borne by the central government; and 3) NGOs, which are the most active champions of decentralisation, but are still weak in terms of networking and their influence on the legislature and opinion-making.

The fiscal policy pursued by the national government was a centralised model of budget financing with subsidies equally shared among the existing networks and cultural institutions. In a context of economic crisis and budget restrictions, this meant less and less funds for their core activities and doomed some of the structures to de-professionalisation.

At the end of the 1990s, the Ministry of Culture has started financing the cultural activities of these institutions on a competitive basis, which makes it possible to provide differentiated support to the individual cultural institutions, depending on their contribution to culture and the artistic and economic results of their activities. This new way of financing is based on the transfer of part of the state subsidies for cultural institutions to concrete creative projects on the basis of equal treatment of applicants.

Background

Late 19th and early 20th century: The climate for culture was constructed of values and goals towards self-affirmation, harmonisation with European culture, openness to foreign cultural influences, enlightenment and, to some extent, emulation. Cultural institutions were regarded as a means to boost the self-confidence of the nation and assert the values of European culture.

1948: This atmosphere changed when the Communist regime took over. During 45 years of communist rule, cultural policy was characterised by total centralisation of cultural processes within the state administration, ideological monopoly over the promotion of cultural values and the extensive development of totalitarian cultural institutions. The arts were regarded as a means of education and enlightenment rather than entertainment and therefore responsibility for the arts and culture was declared as the exclusive domain of the state. Totalitarian cultural institutions were created covering all spheres of cultural life.

1950-1970: By the early 1950s, the system of state cultural institutions was fully established and running smoothly. Each element of this system was hierarchically subordinated and subject to dual – State and Communist Party – control. The cultural policies pursued at the time were ideologically orthodox, and any form of dissent from the official line was penalised. It was only after 1956 that the echo of Khrushchev's reforms brought about a certain thaw in the ideological climate, trumpeted by the ruling Bulgarian Communist Party as its "April Policy", which was promptly abandoned after the Prague Spring in August 1968. The subsequent period of stagnation was extolled as a period of "flowering socialist art".

1970-1980: There was a move to introduce the so-called "public-cum-state principle" in the administration of culture, which presupposed the involvement of all governing bodies and a radically extended range of people, in decision-making processes. The Bureau and the Presidium of the Committee for Culture were elected bodies,

but their heads and members could not take office without the approval of the National Assembly and the State Council. Public participation in cultural debates soon turned into a ritual designed to provide legitimacy to decisions already taken. The promotion of "the public-cum-state principle" as a democratic achievement of Bulgarian cultural policy proved to be a demagogic propaganda campaign: despite the proclaimed participation of governing bodies in culture, the real decision-making took place in the Communist Party. Under the influence of Soviet perestroika (Mikhail Gorbachev's reform policy) in the mid-1980s, some of the creative unions turned into opposition associations of intellectuals and their 1989 congresses became forums for attacks against the communist system.

1989-2000: Bulgaria's new cultural policy model was created after 1989. Culture was one of the spheres worst affected by the economic and spiritual crisis during the course of transition. At the same time, the ongoing reforms in society have had a particularly positive impact on culture. During the transition period, cultural development in Bulgaria was in a searching phase and concepts frequently changed. Few activities of the different levels of government were followed up and there was little coordination between these levels. The main responsibilities for financing culture were decentralised and then recentralised. The private business sector had little interest in supporting cultural activities.

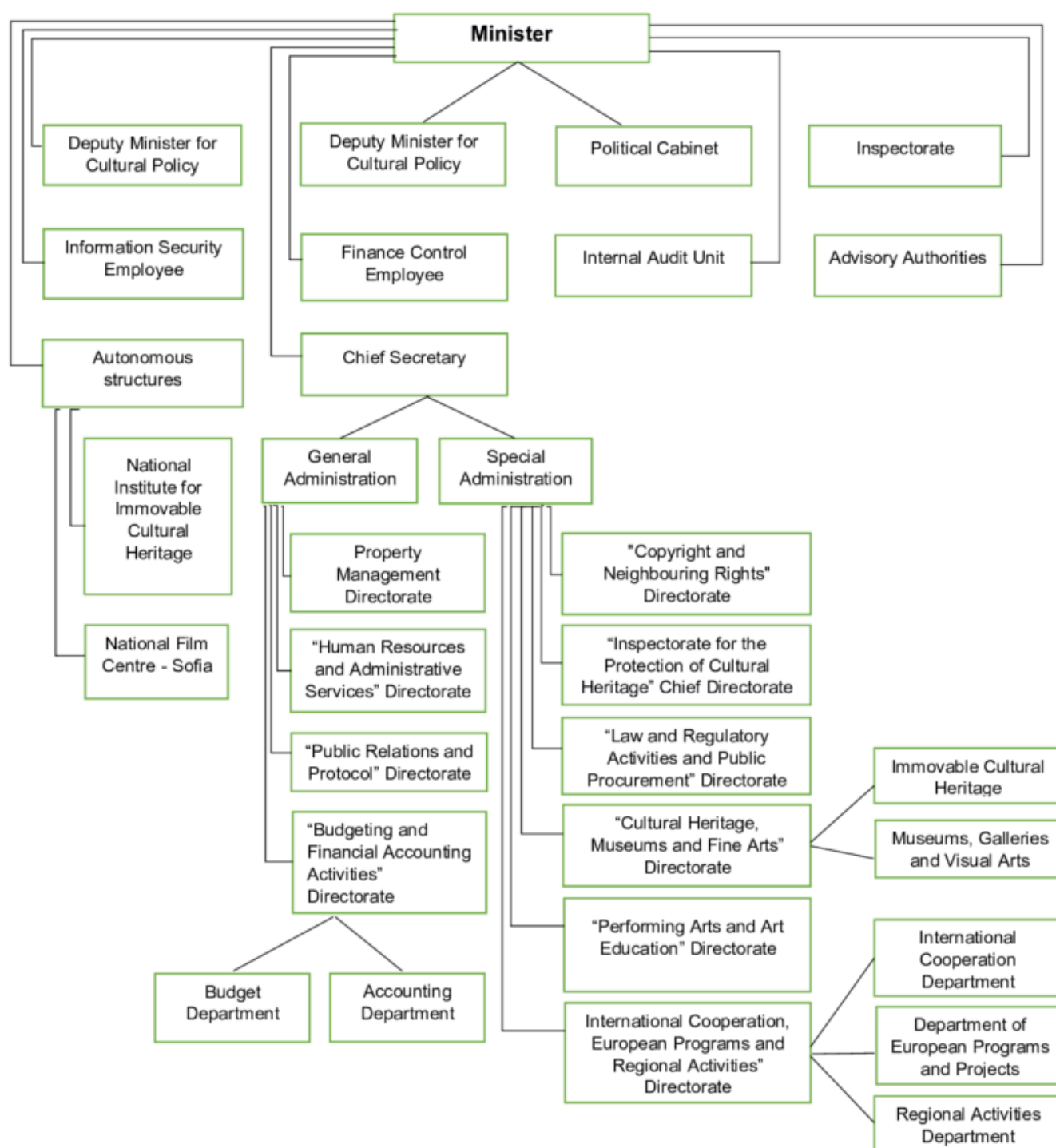
1993-2007: Bulgaria became a candidate for EU membership, which entailed substantial legal and administrative reforms towards decentralisation, democratisation, improvement of access, promotion of cultural diversity, protection of copyrights, internationalisation and facilitation of the artists' mobility, protection and development of cultural heritage and its sustainable use, etcetera; and Bulgaria started its pro-active participation in the work of the key intergovernmental institutions (Council of Europe, UNESCO, CEI etc.) and became an equal player at international scale.

2007: Bulgaria became a full member of the European Union. The synchronisation of the legislation in the field of culture has begun. New regulations are being implemented which clearly define the responsibilities of the different administrative levels of government. Considerable steps forward are being taken by civil society. The third sector is consolidating and the business sector is starting to show signs that they are willing to adopt a new attitude of partnership.

2007-2019: Due to urbanisation, cultural national policy and the related activities and strategies became more focused on the major cities and some municipalities. In 2013, the *Sofia Strategy for Culture 2013-2023* was published, followed by the *Cultural Strategy of Plovdiv Municipality 2014-2024*. In 2014, Sofia was selected by UNESCO as the City of Film and became member of the Creative Cities Network by UNESCO. In 2015, Plovdiv was selected for European Capital of Culture 2019. In 2019, a *Draft National Strategy for the Development of Culture 2019-2029* was published.

1.2. Domestic governance system

1.2.1. ORGANISATIONAL ORGANIGRAM



1.2.2. NATIONAL AUTHORITIES

At the national level, responsibility for the formulation and implementation of cultural policies is shared between the legislature (the National Assembly) and the executive (the Council of Ministers).

The supreme central executive body with the right to initiate legislation in the sphere of culture and formulate the main principles of national cultural policy is the Ministry of Culture.

The Ministry of Culture is headed by a Minister who is advised mainly by a Collegium and several expert councils representing various arts fields. The Minister is entitled to appoint his/her own political cabinet, which supports him/her in reaching and promoting concrete decisions concerning governmental policy and its promotion in society. The Political Cabinet comprises deputy-ministers, the head of the Cabinet, the Parliamentary Secretary and the head of The Public Relations Unit. There are three specialised units within the structure of the Cabinet: Protocol Service, Inspectorate and Internal Audit Units.

The structure of the Ministry has been changed two times in the last decade. The new structure of the Ministry came into force in November 2009. (In June 2010, a third Deputy Minister was appointed to take charge of the new theatre reform.)

In 2014, a new Structural Regulation of the Ministry of Culture came into force. The deputy ministries were cut from three to two. There are four directorates in charge of the Secretary dealing with General Administration – “Administrative Services and Human Resources”, “Public Relations and Protocol”, “Budget, Financial and Accounting Activities” and “Property Management”. The specialised administration includes the general directorate “Inspectorate General for Cultural Heritage” and 6 other directorates of “Cultural Heritage, Museums and Fine Arts”, “Legal Services and Public Procurement”, “European Programs and Projects”, “International and Regional Activities”, “Performing Arts and Art Education” and “Copyright and Neighbouring Rights”.

The Executive Agency National Film Centre and the National Institute of Monuments of Culture, which is in charge of the protection of cultural landscapes, remain structures with an autonomous legal status and budget. The activities of the Executive Agency and the Institute are guided by a programme approved by the Minister of Culture, supervised by a deputy minister and implemented by their respective directors.

1.2.3. REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

The lower levels of cultural competencies correspond to the constitutional division of territorial administrative units: districts (oblast) and municipalities (obshtina). According to the *Law on Protection and Development of Culture*, regional cultural institutes could be founded, transformed or closed by the Council of Ministers on a proposal by the Minister of Culture, in agreement with the regional governor, after a decision by the municipal council on whose territory their headquarters are located. Regional cultural institutes are funded by:

- The municipalities on whose territory their headquarters are located, there are additional funds provided from the state budget for their subsistence;
- From contributions made to their budgets from the state and the municipalities on whose territory regional cultural institutes operate, the amount of which are determined annually by decision of the relevant municipal councils.

In some regions ([Smolyan](#), for example) there is a Regional Council of Culture, an consultative and coordinating body to the Regional Governor. Its task is to assist the governor in the implementation of the state cultural policy. The creation of such councils is not explicitly required by law.

1.2.4. LOCAL AUTHORITIES

The main unit of territorial administration is the municipality (of which there are 262), which is legally autonomous, and has property rights and freedom of association. At the municipal level, cultural competence is exercised in the form of local self-government, including financial control which is distributed among the respective municipal Councils of Culture.

Each municipality has a Deputy Mayor of Culture. Municipalities formulate and implement their policies for the protection and development of culture, combining the principles of national cultural policy with local conditions and traditions.

The Municipal Council is the body that makes key decisions in the municipality, including the municipal funding of cultural institutes in its territory. The council also administrates competitions for cultural initiatives, creative projects and targeted programmes, which are funded by the municipal budget. Its main task is to provide creative scholarships to support young artists, to establish awards for contributions and achievements in culture, support the development of amateur art activities and to create programs for preserving folk art.

Public-expert committees and councils support the activities of the municipalities. These advisory bodies include representatives of creative unions, individual artists and experts. Committees and councils are committed to providing opinions and evaluations on the activities of municipal and regional cultural institutes, and in aligning national cultural policy principles with local conditions and traditions.

On the other hand, the Municipal Council has the obligation to create a municipal culture fund. The fund is financially supported by several sources – provided through the implementation of targeted programmes and projects in the culture, donations, legacy and sponsorships, interest on the accounts of the fund, and others. The fund's resources are directed to the implementation of cultural projects, participation in co-productions with individuals and legal entities of Bulgarian and international cultural initiatives, supporting amateur art activities and providing scholarships for talented children.

1.2.5. MAIN NON-GOVERNMENTAL ACTORS

The sessions of the [Committee on Culture and Media](#) at the National Assembly (Bulgaria's legislative body) are allowed to be attended by citizens, as well as civil and trade union, professional and branch organisations. Their representatives may attend the sessions of the Committee on their own initiative, submit their written opinions and participate in the debates on the draft act by the National Assembly concerning their subject of activity. Each member of the leadership of the Committee on Culture and the Media may invite individuals or legal entities (NGOs) to attend the meeting to address the issues under discussion.

Civil organisations and NGOs also take their place in the Public Council of the Minister of Culture. This is an advisory body for decision-making and policy-making on public cultural policy issues. There are several quota for the amount of relevant professional and civic organisations, NGO's and also citizens in the council.

The branch organisations (professional) in Bulgaria have the opportunity to lobby for concrete politics and law changes. Main actors among them are:

- [Association of Film and Television Producers](#);

- [Bulgarian Association of Music Producers](#);
- [Union of Actors in Bulgaria](#);
- [Union of Bulgarian Journalists](#);
- [Union of Bulgarian Writers](#);
- [Union of Bulgarian Composers](#);
- [Union of Bulgarian Musicians and Dancers](#);
- [Union of Bulgarian Filmmakers](#).

The interest and desire of private businesses to support the development of culture and arts in Bulgaria is starting to grow. The most active are banks and financial institutions, service companies (communications, airlines, etc), distributors of foreign products, followed by industrial companies. Companies are most interested in providing sponsorship to:

- music – a considerable part of the support goes to popular forms;
- literature – supporting publications of particular books; and
- theatre – partnerships with mainly large, powerful companies.

Some banks are the main actors that support young talents, contemporary art and education in the cultural field in Bulgaria. For many years, [Societe Generale](#) has supported the National Academy of Arts and the International Ballet Competition in Varna. In January 2019, a majority stake of the company was acquired by OTP Bank, and cultural policies remain in place for the time being. In January 2012, UniCredit Bulbank opened its own contemporary art gallery, [UniCredit Studio](#), which supports and represents Bulgarian and international authors.

The [Centre for Culture and Debate “The Red House Andei Nikolov”](#) (founded in 2004) is a platform to develop the independent arts scene and stimulate civic participation. The centre operates within three overarching programmes: "Society and Politics", "Arts and Culture", "Social Practices and Psychodrama".

1.2.6. TRANSVERSAL CO-OPERATION

Along with the administrative breakdown of cultural competence, there are interdepartmental commissions that co-ordinate the central government's activities. Culture is just part of the general competence of these commissions, which have been set up for other fields such as education, foreign policy, youth, tourism, and ecology. There are standing and interim interdepartmental commissions that have consultative capacities and the right to initiate legislation. There is a consultative Council on Cultural Affairs which reports to the President of the Republic.

Since 1997, the [National Council for Ethnic and Demographic Issues](#) (NCEDI, now the National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Demographic Issues), within the Council of Ministers, has operated as a state and public body. According to Article 1 of the NCEDI's regulations, the aim of NCEDI is "implementation of consultations and cooperation and coordination between the government structures and non-government organisations, aiming at the formation and realisation of a national policy regarding ethnic and demographic issues and migration". In 2004, the NCEDI was transformed into the National Council for Interethnic Interaction.

Ad-hoc inter-ministerial groups are established in relation to different projects, programmes and national

initiatives – e.g. Project Implementation Units (PIU) for EU funded programmes, National Committees, National Councils and working groups.

The [National Council on the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage](#) was established in 2006. The [Council on Cultural Diversity](#) was also established in 2006 and is mainly in charge of integration of minorities. The Inter-ministerial Advisory Group on the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue was established in April 2007.

An inter-ministerial/intergovernmental working group for digitalisation of cultural heritage (cultural content) was set up at the end of 2008. Its members are representatives from the Ministry of Culture, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, The University Library, National Historical Museum, and the Archives National Agency. In 2009, an inter-ministerial/intergovernmental working group on cultural statistics was set up. Its members are representatives of the Ministry of Culture and the National Statistical Institute and some other agencies such as the Observatory of Cultural Economics.

1.3. Cultural institutions

1.3.1. OVERVIEW OF CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

As a result of the dominance of the state, public cultural institutions have retained their leading role and main responsibility for the development of culture in Bulgaria for years. At the same time, by steadily cutting annual public spending on culture, the state gradually relinquished its former absolute responsibility for culture, thus jeopardising the very survival of some cultural institutions. In the past few years, the state has given priority to the reallocation of public responsibilities to the local level, however, without changing the status of public cultural institutions.

There is no specific statutory framework and clear agenda of cultural reform. The private enterprise aimed at divestment and establishment of non-governmental for-profit (and partly non-profit) organisations has been haphazard. They operate in certain spheres of culture only, foremost the media and cultural industries, where a free market model of cultural products and services was partly established.

Regarding NGOs, support for culture came foremost from external sources or partners – mainly from the Open Society Foundation and various European Union programmes (like [Creative Europe](#)), as well as donations from numerous foreign funds and foundations ([EEA Grants](#)), and from expatriate Bulgarians.

1.3.2. DATA ON SELECTED PUBLIC AND PRIVATE CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

Table 1: Cultural institutions, by sector and domain

Domain	Cultural institutions (subdomains)	Public sector		Private sector	
		Number (year)	Trend last 5 years (In %)	Number (year)	Trend last 5 years (In %)
Cultural heritage	Cultural heritage sites (recognised)				
	Archaeological sites				
Museums	Museum institutions	173 (2014) 145 (2018)	-16,1%		

Archives	Archive institutions	-	-	-	-
Visual arts	Public art galleries / exhibition halls	31 (2014) 29 (2018)	-6,4%		
Performing arts	Scenic and stable spaces for theatre	60 (2014) 60 (2018)*	0%	12 (2014) 15 (2018)	+25%
	Concert houses				
	Theatre companies				
	Dance and ballet companies	59 (2014) 51(2018)	-13,5%		
	Symphonic orchestras	5 (2014) 5 (2018)	0%		
Libraries	Libraries	48 (2014) 47 (2018)	-2,1%		
Audiovisual	Cinemas	49 (2014) 69 (2018)	+40,8%		
	Broadcasting organisations	112 (2014) 116 (2018)	+3,57%		
Interdisciplinary	Socio-cultural centres / cultural houses	3075 (2012) 3321 (2017)**	+8%		

Source: National Statistical Institute

*The data are for state and municipal theatres in total, because both of them are funded by the state.

** There are no data on the number of socio-cultural centres / cultural houses in 2013.

1.3.3. PUBLIC CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS: TRENDS AND STRATEGIES

The national strategy towards decentralisation is vested in the *Protection and Development of Culture Act*, which has changed the status of cultural institutions in Bulgaria. The Act classifies cultural institutions as "state institutions of national importance" (financed wholly and with priority by the Ministry of Culture budget); "state institutions" (financed by the Ministry of Culture and municipalities); "departmental institutions" (financed wholly or partly by the respective department, when they are institutions of a government department); "municipal institutions" (financed by the municipal budget); "regional cultural institutions" (financed by the respective municipality on whose territory they are located, by municipal contributions and supplementary funds determined on an annual basis by the *National Budget Act*).

Cultural NGOs come in many varieties and may call themselves alliances, societies, associations, foundations, funds, unions, committees, centres, festivals, academies, Chitalishte, trustees, independent theatres, federations, institutes, etc. Depending on their function, they are classified mainly as operational and community NGOs. A *Not for Profit Legal Entities Act*, regulating their incorporation and activities, was adopted in 2000.

The Ministry of Culture promotes partnerships between the governmental and nongovernmental sectors. Joint financing, activities and projects between the Ministry and NGOs, as well as sponsorship by for-profit NGOs, have become a common practice in many spheres.

A trilateral agreement on partnership in the formulation, updating, and implementation of the national cultural policy was concluded in the beginning of 2002 between the National Assembly's Committee on Culture, the Ministry of Culture and the National Civic Forum of Culture (an association of cultural NGOs). The interest and desire of private businesses to support the development of culture and arts in Bulgaria is starting to gain speed.

A *Draft Strategy for the Development of Bulgarian Culture 2019 - 2029* was presented in March 2019, which laid down a vertical structure for the cultural sector. Its objectives include the establishment of a long-term policy to

support culture as a national priority; ensuring maximum publicity and transparency in the management of cultural processes at national and regional level; and better conditions for the provision of additional public and alternative funds of modernisation on the network of cultural institutes in the country.

The [budget for culture](#) in 2019 has been increased by BGN 19 million (EUR 9,71 million) on annual basis to BGN 188 million (EUR 96,12 million). This includes a 10% increase for salaries in cultural institutions and a 20% increase for arts schools funding. Nevertheless, the share of the projected financing in the field of culture in Bulgaria drops from 0.5% of the GDP in 2019 to 0.4% for the period 2020-2021, according to data from the *National Strategy for the Development of Culture*. This means that the government relies solely on the country's GDP growth.

1.4. International cooperation

1.4.1. PUBLIC ACTORS AND CULTURAL DIPLOMACY

The cultural agencies and institutes have elaborated a long-lasting and fruitful collaboration with both the public and private sector in culture. The cooperation projects vary from traditional forms of artistic exchange (e.g. exhibitions, workshops, performances, touring etc.) to research and cultural policy development.

In Bulgaria, the most important cultural agencies that cooperate internationally are: Institut culturel Français et de coopération, [Goethe Institut](#), [British Council](#), [Instituto Cervantes](#) (opened in 2005), [Polish Institute in Sofia](#), [Czech Centre](#). They are active in the field of language education, promoting artists from the representing country, supporting the public and non-governmental sectors in the field of social development, education and the arts. Some of the cultural institutes develop projects in the field of science and cultural heritage, and support vulnerable groups and maintain the diversity in arts.

This active collaboration between the cultural agencies and the public at multiple levels brings the Bulgarian cultural sector closer to the European values and acts as both a bilateral and multilateral instrument of cultural diplomacy.

While performing its main tasks in cultural diplomacy, the Ministry of Culture works in close collaboration with, among others, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the National UNESCO Commission and foreign representatives (e.g. embassies, consulates, cultural institutes).

Bulgaria has eleven cultural institutes abroad, which were established as a result of bilateral agreements. They are situated in European capital cities: Berlin, Bratislava, Budapest, London, Prague, Moscow, Skopje, Warsaw, Vienna (the Haus Wittgenstein), Paris and Rome.

The [State Institute for Culture](#) with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was established in 2006 as an instrument of cultural diplomacy. Its main activity is related to the formulation of the Ministry's policy in the field of international scientific, cultural and education cooperation as priorities of Bulgaria's foreign policy. Among the main goals of the institute are to take part in creating a positive image of contemporary Bulgaria with a rich, ancient and dynamic culture, that contributes to the processes of intercultural dialogue and international cultural cooperation.

In 2017, as a member of the Council of Europe, Bulgaria signed the [Convention on Cinematographic Co-production](#). Its goal is to encourage and develop international cinematography production in specific terms.

The *Law on Film Industry* guarantees state funding in the field of film production for projects selected in competition by the National Art Commission. It also guarantees funding for films in co-production with country members of the European Convention on Cinematographic Co-production and other countries. Bulgaria signed an agreement regarding film and the audiovisual field with France, Canada, Israel, Italy, Russia and Turkey. According to the *Film Industry Act* the state support for films with a foreign co-producer may not exceed 20 percent of the film production budget.

Bulgarian artists are actively participating in the programs of EU [Erasmus+](#) and [Creative Europe](#). The [Mobility Programme](#) of the National Culture Fund provides financial support for transnational exchange. Bulgarian cultural professionals participate in international co-working and networking forums thanks to those programs. The Mobility Programme, for example, finances the travel costs of Bulgarian artists and cultural representatives to participate in international cultural forums or foreign artists visits in the country.

1.4.2. EUROPEAN / INTERNATIONAL ACTORS AND PROGRAMMES

Bulgaria became the 26th member of Council of Europe (CoE) in 1992. Bulgaria's membership fee is 0,28% of its budget. In the field of culture, Bulgaria participates in the two Steering Committees of the CoE - the Steering Committee on Culture and the Steering Committee on Cultural Heritage. In 2019, Bulgaria signed the Council of Europe *Convention on Cinematographic Co-production* (revised). The contribution of Bulgaria to the Council of Europe's budget for 2019 is EUR 1 215 152.

In 2018, [Bulgaria hosted the Presidency of the Council of the European Union](#) and, within its framework, organised the Eighth ACEM Meeting of Ministers of Culture. The forum discussed issues of culture as a driving engine for sustainable social and economic development, promoting culture and international dialogue, and enhancing cultural heritage cooperation.

Bulgaria has joined UNESCO in 1956 and in 2007 became a member of its Executive Board. Bulgaria is a member of two intergovernmental committees: the MOST Program and the International Hydrological Program. The country has signed the *Convention for the Conservation of World Cultural and Natural Heritage*, the *Convention for the Conservation of Underwater Heritage*, the *Convention for the Conservation of Intangible Cultural Heritage*, the *Convention for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions*. The main national body for cooperation with UNESCO is the National Commission for UNESCO in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

[The Council of Ministers of Culture in SEE](#) was established in March 2005 in Copenhagen, with the aim of contributing to improving the external visibility of the region (inspired by the Nordic Council model). The Charter on the establishment of the Council has been signed by Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, Croatia, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Montenegro and Turkey. Bulgaria hosted the Presidency of the Council in 2019. In a forum in Sofia with representatives of the European Commission and UNESCO, Bulgaria proposed and other members agreed on establishing a permanent fund to support the work of artist from the Balkans and the cultural cooperation in the region. Further actions to establish the fund will be decided during the Croatian Presidency of the Council of the EU.

Bulgaria joined the MEDIA II Programme in 2000. Having worked with the MEDIA programme for many years,

the Ministry of Culture continued this partnership after 2013, when the Media, Media Mundus and Culture programs were replaced by Creative Europe. The Creative Europe Program Bureau has two offices - Media and Culture. Under the Creative Europe and Media programs in 2018, projects from Bulgaria were supported with a total value of 645 555 euros. The Office Culture offers additional information on the application procedures.

The Ministry of Culture was engaged in carrying out the procedure for the [selection of a Bulgarian city](#) for the European Capital of Culture 2019, which was launched in 2012 (see chapter 1.1).

Being a full member of the Francophone Community since 1993, Bulgaria carries out a number of activities in this framework, which are an intrinsic part of multilateral cultural cooperation. As such, the country is regularly, and actively, involved in francophone initiatives on the international scene – in artistic, political and expert formats (including the debates on the drafting and the ratification of the UNESCO *Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions*). Main activities are organised during the annual celebration of 20th March, the International Francophone Day.

1.4.3. NGO'S AND DIRECT PROFESSIONAL COOPERATION

Initiatives of the private sector in the arts are ongoing within the existing international networks. Although not a part of the official national policy instruments, these exchanges contribute in a great extent to the image of Bulgarian contemporary arts abroad. Festivals, workshops, international exchanges in performing arts, media, film, visual arts and more are run mainly by NGOs and are supported by international funding.

The association for independent theatre – [ACT Association](#) - is a member of [IETM](#), but the Ministries of Culture and Foreign Affairs do not support this network directly.

[Sofia Meetings](#) is an annual co-production market in the framework of the Sofia International Film Festival. The main focus are projects for first, second and third time features by European and other directors. More than 150 industry executives from all over the world visit Sofia to cooperate and search for new projects and films.

Derida Dance Centre hosts the [Residency Program](#) which is among the organisation's main instruments to help realise its mission for providing opportunities for development of contemporary dance in Bulgaria. In the past few years Derida Dance Centre hosted many Bulgarian and foreign artists, who shared their creativity and experience with professionals and non-professionals in the field of contemporary dance in Bulgaria. As a result of this, Derida Dance Centre Residency Program was recognized in 2014 by experts of the European Commission in Brussels as a best practice for the exchange of artistic experience in Europe together with examples from Ireland and Finland.

2. Current cultural affairs

2.1. Key developments

Bulgaria's national cultural policy priorities include:

- preserving the cultural memory and historical heritage;
- creating conditions for the development and enrichment of all spheres of culture as factors for sustainable development;
- designing and adopting an effective mechanism of financing cultural institutions and finding alternative funding forms and sources;
- improving the statutory framework in the sphere of culture; and
- preservation of cultural heritage and digitalisation of cultural content.

As an EU member, Bulgaria's cultural policy must strengthen the place of Bulgarian culture in Europe by preserving its national identity and values. Cultural policy aims to support the creation, protection and dissemination of cultural values, as well as to create an environment which promotes and protects cultural diversity, freedom and creativity.

The Ministry of Culture co-operates with other government institutions in the sphere of – among others – education, environment, tourism and sports, as well as with numerous NGOs and community associations to achieve these cultural policy objectives. Balancing the interests of national art centres, local government, NGOs and the different professional cultural associations has been the guiding principle of recent policy.

The Ministry of Culture's current concept of cultural policy formulation and implementation puts special emphasis on the subsidiarity principle, which presupposes shared obligations and responsibilities for the common good among institutions and citizens – not solely in their capacity as taxpayers, but through a voluntary contribution of part of their time, energy and creativity. The idea of subsidiarity helps to create a new type of community rather than chaos, as the state eventually relinquishes its leading role.

2.2. Cultural rights and ethics

The cultural rights as well as the freedom of expression, participation and access to culture are guaranteed in the *Bulgarian Constitution* (see chapter 4.1.1).

Art. 2 of the *Law on the Protection and Development of Culture* (1999) states that among the basic principles of national cultural policy are the democracy of cultural policy, the freedom of artistic creativity and non-censorship (1), and the preservation and enrichment of cultural and historical heritage (4).

In Art. 10 Ch. 1 (1) and (2) of the *Law on Radio and Television* (1999), the media service providers in Bulgaria are

guided by the principles of:

- Guaranteeing the freedom of expression;
- Guaranteeing the right of information.

According to the same law, the public media (Bulgarian National Television and Bulgarian National Radio) are obliged to promote access to media services for all citizens, and to reflect different societal ideas and beliefs (Article 6, Chapter 3, (1) and (6)).

In Art. 8 Ch. 2 and Ch. 3, television- and radio broadcasters are encouraged to provide services accessible to citizens with disability in their vision and their hearing.

Since 1992, the *Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms* has been in force in Bulgaria, of which Art. 10 states that everyone has freedom of expression.

In terms of regulation on the protection of human, social and cultural rights, there are several bodies:

1. The Ombudsman advocates, by the means and instruments provided for in the *Ombudsman Act*, when the rights and freedoms of citizens are violated by state and municipal authorities and their administrations, by persons entrusted with the provision of public services, as well as by private legal entities.
2. The [Electronic Media Council](#) has been the national regulator of the media environment since 2001, following the closure of the National Radio and Television Council.
3. The [National Council for Journalistic Ethics Foundation](#), founded in 2005, aims to establish and maintain a self-regulatory system for print and electronic media in Bulgaria on the basis of the Bulgarian Media Code of Ethics, adopted in 2005.
4. The [Bulgarian Helsinki Committee](#) (BHC) is an independent non-governmental organisation for the protection of human rights: political, civil, cultural and social rights. The goals of the BHC are to promote respect and protection of human rights, to lobby for legal changes, to foster a public debate on human rights issues and to promote the idea of human rights to the general public.

2.3. Role of artists and cultural professionals

The freedom of speech and expression in the country is guaranteed by the *Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria*. This general law guarantees the freedom of both artists and cultural professionals. According to Art. 23 of the *Constitution*, the state creates the conditions for the free development of science, education and the arts and supports them. Art. 25 states that the freedom of artistic creativity is recognized and guaranteed by law.

At the time being, there is no law to promote the freedom of artists, and there have been no public debates regarding this issue. However, it has been discussed in relation to employment and wages in public and private cultural institutions.

The Bulgarian Association of Employers in the Field of Culture (BAEFC) operates in the sector. Its main objectives are to represent and protect the rights and interests of employers in the field of culture. It represents its members at regional, national, European and international levels. Eight branch committees have been set up at BAEFC in the fields of music and dance, theatre, audiovisual, design, libraries and book publishing, cultural animation, museums, galleries and fine arts, and the multicultural industry. They help in specifying the contractual terms, consultations and communication on branch issues. In addition, they are occupied with proposals for collective agreements and other activities.

In June 2018, a two-year [Branch Collective Labour Contract for the Music-Performing Arts](#) was signed by the Ministry of Culture, BAEFC and the unions. With this document, employers are again committed to take into account the specificity of work in the sector. There are also opportunities to receive additional remuneration for the results achieved by applying a system of criteria and indicators, benefits upon termination of the employment contract upon retirement, as well as greater annual leave according to the specifics of the work.

In November 2018, the Branch Collective Labour Contract was signed for employment at libraries. It regulates the employment and the social and social relations of employees at the National Library St. Cyril and Methodius and the regional libraries throughout Bulgaria. The contract was signed by the representatives of the trade unions and the National Library.

In July 2019, a renewed two-year Branch Collective Labour Contract was signed for museums and art galleries. It stipulates that the minimum starting wage in the industry will come into force from 1 January 2020, if there is a financial possibility within the approved budget. Employers are committed to providing higher pay to PhD professionals.

In 2016, an agreement was reached between the Union of Actors in Bulgaria (UAB) and the Bulgarian Association of Employers in the Field of Culture for the growth of both the number of performances and audience, and the performer's income. The decision followed after it was found that the average wage in the sector is far below Bulgaria's average wage in general. As a result of the analysis, employers and the UAB decided, first, to prevent redundancies in the sector and, second, to increase their basic wages by at least 12 percent. Apart from this, there are minimum protective thresholds for the actors' fees for participation in: film productions, including Bulgarian and foreign films, and commercials. These thresholds are consistent with wage increases in the industry, as well as with changes in Bulgaria's socio-economic conditions.

Artists and cultural professionals in Bulgaria have complete freedom to travel around the world, to participate in joint cultural initiatives (co-productions) abroad and in our country. The Mobility Programme (see chapter 1.4.1) is also provided for this purpose.

There is no official monitoring of artists' freedom in the country.

2.4. Digital policy and developments

Bulgaria is following the process of digitisation that is taking place across Europe and around the world. In this sense, the cultural sector is also undergoing a digital revolution. The way of creating, distributing, promoting and consuming cultural content is changing. To a large extent, digitisation affects the media, the gaming sector, the publishing industry and the music industry.

For a decade, the digitalisation of cultural archives in Bulgaria was carried out without a single strategy, working "piece by piece". However, in 2018, changes were made to the *Cultural Heritage Act*, according to which the Minister of Culture or a designated official of the Ministry coordinates, organises and controls the digitisation of cultural heritage.

Within the framework of the [Operational Programme "Good Governance"](#), the project "Digitisation of the archive of real cultural property of global and national importance, construction of a specialised information system, an electronic register and a public portal" is being implemented. The project is worth BGN 2 million (EUR 1.02 mln.). The share of national funding is BGN 300 000 (EUR 153 000) and the remaining BGN 1.7 million (EUR 868 679) are from the European Social Fund. The implementation of the project is managed by the Ministry of Culture in partnership with the National Institute of Real Cultural Heritage.

On the other hand, the issue of digitalisation at the [Bulgarian Film Fund](#) stays uncertain and there are no measures or strategies applied on saving or digitising the old Bulgarian film footage; the state has not yet initiated a project related to film heritage. However, in 2018, Minister of Culture Boil Banov expressed hope that such a project would be launched in 2019 with funding from the Norwegian Fund. This becomes more urgent, as the existence of the film archives of the country is threatened by the lack of preservation and storage.

In the context of the digital revolution in Bulgaria, the National Academic Library Information System Foundation ([NALIS](#)) was established in 2009, which is actively engaged in the digitisation of the funds of libraries, archives and museums. One of the main tasks of the organisation is to help increase the level of library-information communication between scientific institutions, higher education institutions and large library repositories. The aim is to respond to the growing digital content needs of Bulgarian society and to assist in the implementation of new information service models that meet world standards. Last but not least, the aim is to promote international cooperation in the field. As a result of its activities, NALIS has so far built a comprehensive catalog with free of charge internet access, which allows to find titles from over 3.6 million bibliographic data from the electronic catalogs of 45 Bulgarian libraries with one search, including scientific and public ones. The activities of NALIS are funded by a programme of the [America for Bulgaria Foundation](#) and with donations from domestic and foreign various organisations.

There are also regional initiatives to digitise cultural heritage. The State Archives Agency started work on the project "[Positive Memories of Old Negatives](#)" under the programme Cultural Heritage, module Preservation and Promotion of Cultural Heritage. It aims the promotion of historical events and facts from Pleven (a town in North Bulgaria) and the region by visualising old negatives. The project is funded by the National Culture Fund and its total value is BGN 9 638 (EUR 4 925). It is implemented in the period July 1st, 2019 until April 30th, 2020.

There are also tools that aim to fund cultural digitisation activities in Bulgaria:

- This year, the [Culture Programme of the Municipality of Sofia](#) has set as its priority the "Cultural Heritage of a Changing City", financing the activities of digitisation of culture – digital culture, communication through technology and the protection of cultural heritage through technology. The budget of the Culture 2020 Programme is nearly BGN 1.5 million (EUR 766 269).
- In order to preserve, develop and promote intangible cultural heritage, the [National Culture Fund](#) also prioritises digital forms. The Cultural Heritage Programme, module Preservation and Promoting Cultural

Heritage, focuses on improving access to cultural heritage through digital technologies. The total budget of the programme is 180 000 BGN (EUR 91 952). Digital arts and new media forms are also treated within the Debuts programme, which funds debut projects by amateurs or new talents. The total budget of the programme is BGN 300 000 (EUR 153 253).

2.5. Cultural diversity

2.5.1. NATIONAL / INTERNATIONAL INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

The authorities responsible for realising intercultural dialogue activities are: the Ministry of Culture, the NCCEDI and non-governmental organisations.

Intercultural dialogue is the topic of the *Draft Strategy for the Development of Bulgarian Culture 2019-2029*. Dialogue between external and internal communities is the focus of priorities in the fields of cultural heritage, visual and performing arts, intercultural cooperation and others. The document emphasises that cultural differences are a factor for sustainable development and an example of cultural maturity. In this regard, it is a priority to stimulate communication with EU countries but also with other European countries, with an emphasis on cooperation in the SEE region, in particular the Western Balkans. The aim is to continue contacts with China, Japan, Russia, the United States and others. Last but not least, cooperation between cultural and artistic professionals is supported in the draft strategy.

In Bulgaria, the National Council for Co-operation on Ethnic and Demographic Issues (NCCEDI), under the aegis of the Council of Ministers, is the main national level institution which is responsible for coordinating policies related to intercultural dialogue. It facilitates cooperation between state bodies and NGOs of different minority groups and considers policy proposals submitted by other Ministry departments. Following approval by the Council of Ministers, the NCCEDI monitors, analyses and coordinates measures aimed to:

- guarantee human rights;
- preserve and strengthen tolerance and understanding; and
- create conditions that ethnic minorities in Bulgaria need to sustain and develop their culture, as well as to preserve the most important elements of their identity: religion, language, traditions and cultural heritage.

Regional Councils on ethnic and demographic issues are being created within the administrative structures of district governments. They are responsible for implementing nationally approved measures in their relevant district/region, as well as for developing relevant regional strategies and programmes.

The NCCEDI receives annual funding, from the Council of Minister's budget, to support organisations of ethnic minority groups and their activities. The following types of projects are eligible for funding:

- cultural events such as arts festivals, exhibitions (fine arts, applied arts and crafts);
- artistic groups and their activities such as theatres, choirs, dance performances, art schools, etc.;

- celebrations of historical and traditional holidays;
- organisation of seminars and conferences;
- educational projects;
- extra-curricular education programmes for children and students;
- printing and distribution of poetry, collections of folk tales, songs, proverbs; and
- audio and video productions.

In addition, the Centre for Educational Integration of Children and Pupils from Ethnic Minorities (CEIDUEM) was established in Bulgaria by Decree 4 of the Council of Ministers on 11 January 2005. There is also a *Strategy for the Educational Integration of Children and Pupils from Ethnic Minorities (2015-2020)* (see chapter 2.5.2 for more information).

The operational goals of the *National Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria for Roma Integration (2012-2020)* include the coverage and retention of Roma children and pupils in the educational system, the provision of quality education in a multicultural educational environment. In addition, the objectives include:

- preserving and promoting the traditional Roma culture;
- the development of amateur art among the Roma as premise for professional development and realisation; and
- the stimulation of the Roma community for active participation in public cultural life.

[Hanns Seidel Foundation](#) is engaged in promoting cross-border cooperation in the Balkan countries and strengthening cultural relations with the German-speaking area with academies and seminars.

In general, young people are a priority for organisations engaged in intercultural dialogue in the country.

One of the NGOs in this sector is the Centre for International Youth Activity in Bulgaria ([IYAC Bulgaria](#)). It engages young people in local, national and international initiatives in the fields of culture, sport, volunteering and non-formal education, promoting youth exchange.

The [National Youth Forum](#) is the largest youth platform in Bulgaria, bringing together fifty youth organisations from all over the country. It is committed to the active participation of young people in intercultural dialogue, both at national and European level.

The Erasmus Student Network ([ESN Bulgaria](#)) represents non-profit student associations whose main goal is to provide support to exchange students in different universities in Bulgaria. The organisation strongly encourages intercultural dialogue.

2.5.2. DIVERSITY EDUCATION

The idea of diversity education is predominantly present at the national level and is reflected in some of the laws of Bulgaria. The main objectives of diversity education programs are primarily focused on equality and the promotion of tolerance.

According to Art. 22, Ch. 2, (8) of the *Pre-school and School Education Act*, state education standards are for civil, health, environmental and intercultural education. In Art. 76, (5) states that in the process of school education subjects in the field of intercultural education may be taught.

According to Art. 6 of *Ordinance 13 on Civil, Health, Environmental and Intercultural Education*, adopted in 2016, the intercultural education is part of the class, interest activities and general support activities for personal development. According to Art. 7, the intercultural education is provided by integration and through a separate school subject called Civil Education.

The Inclusive Education Directorate of the Ministry of Education and Science is engaged in supporting the state policy for the development of forms of educational integration of children and students with special educational needs and with chronic diseases in the system of pre-school and school education.

The Ministry of Education and Science also has a directorate responsible for working with the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education. The Agency is funded by the Ministries of Education from the member states and the EC, with the support of the EP.

The *Draft National Strategy for the Child 2019-2030* is in line with the objectives and fundamental principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. According to the strategy, every child in the country should live and develop its potential in an integrated healthy, safe and encouraging environment for self-development. The planned measures are divided into five key areas, including quality education for all children.

The *Centre for Educational Integration of Children and Students from Ethnic Minorities (CEIDUEM)* was established in Bulgaria by Decree 4 of the Council of Ministers of January 11, 2005. A *Strategy for the Educational Integration of Children and Students from Ethnic Minorities* was adopted for the period 2015-2020. This document focuses on the realisation of educational integration in Bulgarian kindergartens and schools with the following: intercultural education, preservation and development of the cultural identity of minority groups through education and teaching in the mother tongue about history and culture. Article 2 of the Strategy focuses on interculturality, which is interpreted as an opportunity for mutual enrichment through interaction between children and students, expression of their own cultural identity and an issue when it comes to national self-isolation or self-isolational identity. A major problem pointed out in the strategy is that "the study of the traditional culture of the respective ethnic community is not widely involved in the educational process". The strategy is forced to find a solution the following problems in relation to intercultural education: to make the intercultural approach fundamental in the planning of activities and in the organisation of training; more educational content on the history and culture of ethnic minorities; stimulating and recruiting pedagogical specialists who have the competence to impart knowledge and skills to children on the perception of ethno-cultural differences; and overcoming negative stereotypes and cultural distances.

The Public Council on Cultural Diversity, within the Ministry of Culture, has been operating since 2002.

International student exchanges are being organised in art schools, which are under the management of the

Ministry of Culture.

The Ministry of Education and Science organises training courses for academic personnel covering information about Roma history and culture, problem solving and management of the class.

Efforts to set up intercultural education programmes in the system of secondary schools are the prerogative of each individual educational institution.

Regional Councils on Ethnic and Integration issues are functioning under the regional administrations (28 in total) and are working on programmes approved by these authorities. The Councils involve experts from the regional administrations, mayors of municipalities, representatives of the territorial units of the central executives, and public minorities' organisations working in the respective regions. Such experts are nominated in almost half of the 263 Bulgarian municipalities.

Beyond the traditional education system, NGOs play an important role in promoting social inclusion and tolerance by developing different educational projects. Since 2016, the [Red House Centre for Culture and Debate](#) and the Gulliver Clearing House Foundation have been working with local and immigrant communities in one of Sofia's neighbourhoods. They bring children and young people who are living on the street and their families to the education workshops – reading and writing; art workshops - theatre, psychodrama, dance, drawing; and a social storytelling studio. In 2018, the project received support from the Sofia Municipality's Europe 2018 Program.

2.5.3. MEDIA PLURALISM AND CONTENT DIVERSITY

Bulgaria has state- and private-owned radio stations and television networks providing national coverage, as well as numerous private radio and television stations providing local news coverage. Cultural events and issues of international, national and local relevance are covered extensively in their programmes. Both the state-owned and private electronic media have numerous, mainly weekly, programmes for minority cultural groups. For example, the daily Turkish news programme broadcast by the Bulgarian National Television.

According to the regulations of *Article 71* of the *Radio and Television Act*, Bulgarian National Radio (BNR) and Bulgarian National Television (BNT) should provide assistance to the creation and dissemination of national audio and audiovisual productions:

- BNR allocates at least 5 percent of the subsidy received from the state budget and Radio and Television Fund for the creation and performance of Bulgarian musical and radio dramatic productions; and
- BNT allocates at least 10 percent from the subsidy received from the state budget and Radio and Television Fund for Bulgarian film and television productions.

The Radio and Television Fund was created by *Article 98* of the *Radio and Television Act*. The fund's budget consists of:

- monthly reception fees for radio and television programmes;
- initial and yearly licensing and registration fees for radio and television; and

- interest rate resources already in the fund.

Resources collected via the fund are to be used for the financing of:

- BNR and BNT (for preparation, creation and dissemination of national programmes);
- council for Electronic Media;
- projects of national importance, related to the introduction and usage of new technologies in radio and television;
- significant cultural and educational projects; and
- projects designed to extend the dissemination of radio and television programmes over population and/or territory.

There is a lack of transparency of media ownership and capital in the commercial broadcasting sector, with no public register of ownership. The provisions on media ownership in the *Law on Radio and Television* (1998) – and also the *Telecommunications Law* (2003) and the *Law for the Protection of Competition* (1998) – aim to prevent broadcasters from monopolising or even dominating the market. In practice, however, there are no effective anti-monopoly regulatory mechanisms.

There is an Article in the *Law on Radio and Television* (1999) that refers to the monopoly prevention:

Article 108. Upon submission of documents for the granting of licenses under Article 111, the applicants shall declare that they do not hold any interests, shares or rights of any other kind to participation in radio and television operators, in excess of the permissible limit, according to the anti-trust legislation of the Republic of Bulgaria. (The *Competition Protection Act* (2008) defines the concentration of economic activity, and the *Commercial Law* (1991) regulates the procedures for transformation of companies).

In the [2016 Media Pluralism Monitor Report](#), high risks for media pluralism in Bulgaria were detected primarily in the areas of market plurality and political independence. Three of the market plurality indicators point toward a particularly high risk: media ownership concentration (horizontal) (96%), commercial and owners influence over editorial content (92%) and cross media concentration of ownership and competition enforcement (89%). Two indicators in the political independence domain point to high risk: state regulation of resources and support for media sector (97%) and political control over the media outlets (79%).

Up to now (2019), no measures have been taken to combat concentration in the media sector, even if the issue is being actively discussed between the media experts. An example of this is the conference *(R) Evolution in Journalism. Media Innovation in Central and Eastern Europe*, organised by the Association of European Journalists – Bulgaria. It discussed the topics of media freedom and independence in the country, the decline of the media environment and the need to take actions to address these issues.

The circumstances in Bulgaria led to the development of a mainly vertical system of concentration – the telecommunication operator, in the majority of cases, is an owner both of a television and of a radio channel, of the studio complex, of the broadcasting equipment, of the transmitting cable network – i.e. the entire chain for

media broadcasting.

The problem is also clearly reflected in the 2019 Reporters Without Borders [World Freedom of Speech Index](#), according to which Bulgaria ranks 111th out of 180 countries. This is the worst result among all EU's member states. The index shows that journalists in the country do not feel free and independent.

Currently, the Bulgarian public media are in crisis; the radio is fighting a scandal over freedom of expression, and television is having a huge debt.

Although both the *Constitution of Republic of Bulgaria* and the *Electronic Media Act (2007)* guarantee freedom of expression and journalistic expression in Bulgaria, the Bulgarian National Radio (the oldest electronic medium in the country) fell into an unprecedented crisis in September 2019. A BNR journalist covering the legal issues was taken off air, which happened during the election of a new general prosecutor. Meanwhile, the broadcast of the Horizon programme was suspended for five hours. At a subsequent hearing of Horizon's editorial board, shocking facts were presented to the Council of Electronic Media for [exerting pressure](#) on the general radio director – for restricting journalists, imposing censorship and interfering with editorial independence.

At the same time, Bulgarian National Television is over-indebted. The public television's reports at the end of 2018 indicate that its liabilities exceed BGN 18 million (EUR 9 202 483). However, the BNT unions issued a joint statement stating that the budget deficit is over BGN 35 million (EUR 17 893 716). It is estimated that by the end of 2019 the amount will reach BGN 44 million. Bankruptcy on public television is happening, even though its budget subsidy and its own revenue are relatively constant. However, the funds raised are outweighed by higher costs for outside productions, buying more sports rights, increasing staff salaries and purchasing large film packages and programmes.

The press is entirely privately owned.

There are no available statistical data on the correlation between imported and locally produced programmes in Bulgaria. *The Law on Radio and Television (1999)* sets the programming quotas: at least 50 percent of the total annual programme time must be for European and Bulgarian programming, excluding newscasts, sports shows, game shows on radio and TV, commercials and the radio and TV market, when that is applicable.

There are no specialised TV channels for arts and culture in Bulgaria, but there are culture-dedicated TV shows – [Culture.Bg](#) (BNT) and [Multimedia](#) (Bulgaria On Air). They cover the cultural sector in general, including current news and interviews with Bulgarian and foreign cultural representatives. BNT also broadcasts the literary program [The Library](#).

Bulgarian journalists have opportunities to participate in various programmes related to culturally sensitive issues. Regular information on such programmes and initiatives is published on the [AEJ website](#).

2.5.4. LANGUAGE

According to the *Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria*, the official language is Bulgarian. The issue of "mother tongues" (the term "minority language" is not used in the *Bulgarian Constitution*, which regards "mother tongue" as the more relevant term) is addressed in two specific laws. The first concerns radio and television broadcasting, regulated by the *Radio and Television Act* [Article 12 (2)], which lists the cases in which programmes

may be broadcast in a language other than the official one: 1) when they are aired for educational purposes and 2) when they are designed for Bulgarian citizens whose mother tongue is not Bulgarian.

The second law addresses the status of "mother tongue" as a subject in Bulgarian schools, regulated by the *National Education Act* [Article 8 (2)] and the *Syllabus and Minimum Comprehensive Education Act* [Article 15 (3)]. According to the provisions of the first Act, students whose mother tongue is not Bulgarian are entitled to mother tongue tutoring in municipal schools, with the state providing protection and exercising control; the second Act defines "mother tongue" as a "compulsory optional subject", which means that if students want to study their mother tongue, the municipality or the state is obliged to provide them with this opportunity.

Public debate was mainly focused on the previous Act and was related to the possibilities of municipalities to provide the necessary resources and qualified trainers. Separately, nationalistic oriented citizens and media were disputing the necessity of news broadcasting in Turkish on BNT, but these voices did not get wide public support.

2.5.5. GENDER

Gender equality and culture is mainly on the agenda of NGOs. For example, the Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation is an independent NGO promoting social justice, gender equality and human rights through research, education, legislative changes and advocacy.

Some NGOs deal specifically with the equal integration of women from the minority cultural communities – especially Roma women – into the mainstream life of Bulgarian society.

The Bulgarian Women's Fund is an organisation that supports local non-governmental organisations working for women's rights to achieve equality in all spheres of public life and to eliminate all forms of discrimination, including in the cultural sector. The Fund seeks to promote women's artistic participation through various initiatives. In 2019, for example, the [Bulgarian Fund for Women](#) announced a competition for artistic projects for women with a prize pool of BGN 30 000. The competition aims to provoke debate about the role of women in art and society today.

The NGO Gender Project for Bulgaria, founded in 1994, is working on raising the public awareness of equal opportunities of men and women and women's rights as human rights. It lobbies the national and local authorities to implement the gender equality policy of UN and EU.

At this stage, there are no official data on the number of women in key and management positions in the cultural sector.

2.5.6. DISABILITY

Art. 51, Ch. 2 of the *Employment Promotion Act* states that for every job created in which an unemployed person with a permanent disability can be employed, a subsidy is given to the employer for the time of this person's employment, but for a period of minimal three months and a maximum of twelve months.

In 2016, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy created a [National Disability Strategy 2016-2020](#), as well as an action plan for its implementation. Its purpose is to provide people with disabilities access to cultural life.

There are no specific strategies to support people with disabilities as professionals in the cultural labour market. However, there are organisations that seek to promote the participation of people with disabilities in cultural life, to find them employment in the cultural sector and to not marginalise them with regards to cultural access:

- Since 2017, the Sofia International Film Festival has a [Cinema for the Blind programme](#) that promotes the cultural consumption of people with visual problems.
- In 2017, the [JAMBA](#) online platform was created, which offers consulting services to provide a pre-service environment (training and educational courses) for people with disabilities, as well as follow-up recruitment for disabled people in Bulgaria. This includes the cultural sector.

Bulgaria ratified the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* in 2012. The purpose of this Convention is to promote, protect and guarantee all human rights and fundamental freedoms of persons with disabilities. In 2015, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy constructed an *Action Plan of the Republic of Bulgaria* on the implementation of the [UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) (2015-2020).

2.6. Culture and social inclusion

The Parliament ratified the *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities* (Council of Europe) in 1999. Bulgaria has also ratified the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* and signed the *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination* of the United Nations.

At the national level, a *National Strategy for Poverty Reduction and Encouraging of Social Inclusion 2020* has been adopted, which identifies equal access to culture and sport as an important factor for social inclusion.

For its part, the Ministry of Culture is also committed to the practical implementation of the principles for the protection of cultural diversity. This happens through its specialised units, local and regional cultural institutions and organisations. The district administrations and the local authorities have the task of assisting the Ministry in carrying out these tasks.

An important development was the creation of a National Council of Ethnic and Demographic Issues (NCEDI) which was transformed into the [National Council for Interethnic Interaction](#) in 2004 (see chapter 1.2.6).

In addition, a *Short-term Strategy for the Implementation of the State Policy for Equal Integration of the Roma in the Bulgarian National Culture* has been developed.

The issues of social and cultural inclusion are also addressed by the Roma Public Council on Cultural Affairs and the Council on Cultural Diversity. The second one assists the Ministry of Culture in the policy of cultural integration of minority groups in the country.

A concept for the functioning and operation of Roma cultural and information centres has been developed. Meanwhile, a process to create a Roma Music Theatre has started, as well as two Turkish Musical and Drama Theatres, based in the cities Razgrad and Kardzhali.

The Ministry of Culture's priorities in the field of cultural and social inclusion are:

- the assessment of existing policy infrastructure for ethnic and religious communities;
- making municipalities and districts leading actors in cultural integration policy, and activating the joint activities of the Ministry of Culture, the regional and municipal administrations in implementing initiatives for the inclusion of minorities in the Bulgarian society; and
- protecting the cultural diversity, and encouraging the implementation of programmes and projects related to the preservation of traditional minority culture.

The [Centre for Non-Formal Education and Cultural Activity Alos](#) aims to create an appropriate cultural and social environment for a meaningful life in Bulgaria. It also uses art to overcome social exclusion and the exclusion of socially disadvantaged people from the society.

The [Open Society Institute – Sofia](#) actively contributes to the inclusion of the Roma community, which through various projects stimulates the Roma's integration into Bulgaria's socio-economic and cultural life. With the help of the organisation, the portals [ethnos.bg](#) and [romunda.net](#) were created, of which the second is currently active. The portal provides useful information about minorities – news, opportunities, documents, documentaries, and more. The platform was created with funds from the PAIRS project in 2017.

Within the Open Society Institute, the [Active Citizens Fund](#) operates in the framework of the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism 2014-2021. The fund has a budget of EUR 15 500 000 to finance activities aimed at reducing economic and social disparities, and empowering vulnerable groups. A minimum of ten percent of the funds are earmarked for Roma inclusion.

In connection to the increased number of refugees in Bulgaria in the last few years, a programem for employment and training of refugees has been implemented in the country. It works with vulnerable groups in the labour market and aims to help refugees to adapt successfully and to enter into the labour market in the country. The trainings are in Bulgarian and give the trainees a professional qualification.

In 2005, the Bulgarian Red Cross, the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee and Caritas Bulgaria established the [Bulgarian Refugee and Migrant Council](#). In 2019, the Council implemented the Refugee Integration Advocacy in Bulgaria project, funded by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Within the project the following activities have been accomplished:

- maintaining and updating the online platform [www.refugee-integration.bg](#), which aims to provide access to information resources for municipalities and other concerned sides on refugee integration in Bulgaria;
- organising a national forum on Advocacy for Refugee Integration; and
- developing an e-book *Good Practices for Integration of Refugees Through Culture and Sport*.

Inclusion of the elderly in the cultural life of the country is one of the priorities in the *National Strategy for Active Life of the Elderly in Bulgaria 2019-2030*. Along with the many initiatives to involve elders, all institutions of culture and the arts (theatres, cinemas, concert halls, etc.) are subject to reductions in ticket prices for retirees.

Another important element concerns an amendment to the *Media Act*, which eliminates the danger of

regionalisation of minority culture, i.e. the creation of ethnic regions by means of radio and TV broadcasts as a prelude to ethnic-based territorial differentiation.

2.7. Societal impact of arts

In Bulgaria, social cohesion is a priority, in which cultural components have multiple inputs at central and local levels, through various actions and projects implemented by institutions, local authorities and NGOs.

There is no consolidated information about the development and implementation of public policies to promote social cohesion at national and regional levels, although multiple actions are taking place.

In general, the non-governmental sector is most committed to using cultural practices to create an environment for social change in Bulgaria.

The Red House Centre for Culture and Debate, for example, has its own social program, focused at the most vulnerable groups in Bulgarian society: children who are deprived of parental care, the homeless, the elderly in institutions, the mentally ill, the marginalised by origin, ethnicity or lack of official status. One of the successful endeavours in this direction is the [Pavilion 19](#) project, which is working with local and migrant communities at the Women's Market in Sofia, a place where the representatives of these communities are concentrated. The activities are related to art, culture and psycho-social support – theatre, cinema, drawing, music, psychodrama and psycho-social support.

The theme of creativity among children is also presented within the framework of the scientific and practical forum *Creative Education – Pedagogical Practices Inspired by the Ideas of Sir Ken Robinson and Dr. Maria Montessori*, organised by the Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski in 2018. The main topics of the forum included supporting early childhood and school creativity and creating a supportive environment through creativity.

At a local level, the Sunny Paths Foundation implements the project The Art of Tolerance – A Shield Against Aggression and Hate Speech in Adolescents, which is financially supported by the Sofia Municipality and the Programme “Europe” 2019. Within the project’s framework, cultural events are taking place that aim to avoid aggression, extremism and xenophobia through creativity and talent.

Since 2012, the GLAS Foundation has been organising [Sofia Pride Arts](#) – a festival for contemporary LGBTI art within Sofia Pride. Its main goal is to show the diversity and achievements of the LGBTI community, both globally and locally.

Theatre is used as a tool for the socialisation of minority groups. An example is the activity of the [Tzvete Theatre](#), which has realised different projects for:

- the development of personality potential and value building in the adolescent value system;
- creating conditions for successful introduction into the social life of young people from these communities; and
- breaking public stereotypes towards “others”.

Since 1994, the Tzvete Theatre has completed fifteen projects in this field.

[Fine Acts](#) is a global social engagement platform exploring the intersection between human rights, the arts and technology. Its idea is to raise awareness for issues such as domestic violence through arts, and also contribute to concrete solutions. Within the Fine Acts Labs Sofia format, the organisation connects artists from different disciplines with other human rights professionals and activists. For a period of time, and using each one of their skills, they have to come up with a solution together and to create an artistic product. As a result, artworks that undermine stereotypes and change the status quo have been created.

2.8. Cultural sustainability

Although it has been an issue of debate for several years in Bulgaria, little progress has been made with regard to cultural sustainability and sector specific strategies.

A *Draft Strategy for the Development of Bulgarian Culture 2019 - 2029* was presented in 2019. The project includes a chapter on Performance and Financial Instruments, but it does not provide an accurate analysis of how many projects, including those financial instruments, have been developed so far. Furthermore, the participation of private entities and the civil sector is not described, while the *Law on Development and Protection of Culture* (1999) states that private entities and NGOs are equal to the state and municipal entities. the implementation of which is not foreseen in the *Draft Strategy for the Development of Bulgarian Culture 2019 - 2029*.

According to the Strategy, funding from the state and municipal budget, alternative funding for (unspecified) projects and programmes, as well as funding from donations and sponsorships are envisaged. The *Law on Patronage* and the pledge of creating an art lottery is mentioned, but there is no commitment for the deadlines needed to realise it. This tool has been discussed for years, but its actual creation has been suspended.

According to an analysis by the [Cultural Economics Observatory](#), value added at factor costs of the sector is 4.5%. However, the cost of culture in Bulgaria is decreasing.

There is a difference between the commitments of the Strategy and the three-year budget forecast. The share of cultural funds will shrink from 0.5% in 2019 to 0.4% in 2020.

In addition, strategies for their development are required for the development of individual cultural trends. So far, Bulgaria has only a draft national strategy for the entire industry, but lacks in-depth analysis, ideas and recommendations in the various segments, including their financial provision.

Although the Strategy is project by the Ministry of Culture, the *National Cultural Strategy* does not show that it is related to other institutions in the country, as well as to the overall economic development of the country. However, the fact that *Draft Strategy* is not legally adopted yet doesn't speak to cultural sustainability in Bulgaria.

There aren't any programs aimed at facilitating cultural sustainability by the authorities.

In the first half of 2019, [Plovdiv was the European Capital of Culture](#), becoming the first Bulgarian city to be chosen as such. The program included over 300 projects and nearly 500 events spread across the entire Central South Region. Many of the traditions of the ancient city came to life with renewed power and scale. An unknown

cultural content has emerged that will remain a legacy for the future. Examples of projects that reflect the past and pave the way for the future are "Smoke. Tobacco Stories", "Odysseus", "Cyrillization Programme", "Puldin Ethno – Festival of Ethnic Culture", etc. Such events give the opportunity for stable economic growth in the region through cultural activities.

2.9. Other main cultural policy issues

The Red House Centre for Culture and Debate – together with various partners – organises debates and discussions on different cultural policy issues on a regular basis (regarding for example the national strategy for culture, culture in Bulgarian foreign policy, public financing of culture and Bulgarian culture in the EU).

In 2019, within the context of the [Festival of Ideas](#) and just a month before the European Parliament elections, a debate was organised on the subject of freedom of expression and its potential regulation. The purpose of the initiative was to provoke in-depth and free discussion on topics that are key to the EU's future, but also relate to Bulgaria's cultural policy. Under the umbrella of the same event, a debate was organised on the Future of the Media in Europe, focusing on issues of misinformation, pressure on the media, social networks and their impact on civil society and democracy. The topic is extremely relevant given the 111th place of Bulgaria in the ranking of [Reporters without Borders for Freedom of Speech](#).

Part of the problems of cultural policy in Bulgaria was also outlined within the framework of the Second Critical Forum on Cultural Policies in Bulgaria with the topic "Review of the legislation in the field of culture and media". The highlights include the need to create a *Performing Arts Act* in the country, to preserve and to socialise cultural heritage, as well as the role of managers in cultural institutes.

In 2015-2016, there was an intense debate in Bulgaria about communist monuments and the removal of the Monument to 1300 Years of Bulgaria. Such debates are limited to particular cases and there is no single strategy or policy to preserve the monuments from this controversial historical period.

In 2016, was held a discussion on "[Sculpture and the City](#)", which touches on the topic of the place and quality of monumental arts in the urban environment. The debate has been provoked in the background of conflicting regulatory rules that once again raise questions about who and how decisions are made in the public space.

In 2017, the debate "How should (not) cultural policy be made?" was held at the Red House Centre for Culture and Debate. The theme of cultural heritage has traditionally provoked controversy over emotional and historical burdens. The purpose of the debate was to discuss how cultural heritage policies are conducted and how we decide what we keep and what we eliminate.

In 2019, the "Professors' Box: The European City" debate was organised by the Culture Portal. It raised questions about how the public space in the European city is conceived as a successor to the Roman city – in the context of the historical heritage and the future development of the urban environment.

3. Cultural and creative sectors

3.1. Heritage

The present *Culture Heritage Act* (2009), which replaced the former *Cultural Monuments and Museums Act* (1969), introduced a new integrative concept for cultural heritage and sets up a new national system for protection, management and sustainable use. The law was adopted after years of debate and its main achievement is to recognise the responsibility of the state and society to protect and preserve the cultural heritage of Bulgaria for the benefit of its citizens and for international visitors. The law states two main groups of monuments that are described as movable and immovable. This regulatory differentiation is due to the different modes, procedures and proponents of movable and immovable monuments of cultural protection.

The movable monuments with the greatest scientific and cultural value are included in a National Museum Stock. The stock register is kept at the Museums, Galleries and Fine Arts Directorate of the Ministry of Culture.

The Republican budget, endorsed each year by the Parliament, provides funding in the field of immovable cultural heritage preservation, allocated in line with the following scheme:

Through the budget of the Ministry of Culture

For each financial year, the Ministry of Culture devises a proposal for the benchmarking of the state subsidy funding for specific monuments and specific types of work that the Minister of Culture approves. The following criteria for the selection of monuments to be included in the State Assignment have priority in the proposal preparation:

- Cultural heritage properties with national or international significance;
- Monuments at an advanced stage of the conservation and restoration works, which can possibly be concluded during the year of the funding;
- Monuments in the process of conservation and restoration works, for which interrupting the technological cycle is unacceptable;
- Monuments in decayed physical state, whose integrity is endangered; and
- If the owners of monuments are committed to secure additional funding for different activities during the financial year, together with the municipality where the monuments are located.

Through the budget of the Ministry of Finance

The Ministry of Finance secures credits for investigation and protection of monuments of culture that are covered by the allotted funding for the site.

Through the budget of the municipalities

Municipalities have a subsidy for specialised activities for monuments of culture with local importance.

Through the Religious Denominations Directorate with the Council of Ministers

Regional and local government funding sources. The financing of the local level activities for preservation of architectural and archaeological heritage comes from the following sources:

- Annual Target Subsidy from the Ministry of Culture. The Minister of Culture has contracts with municipalities for the carrying out of clearly specified activities on certain sites included in the programme prepared in advance. The budget subsidy covers part of the expenditures under that programme (generally between 50% and 80%), and the respective municipality provides the balance;
- Municipal budgets adopted every year by the Municipal Councils; and
- Private funding and sponsors include the private owners of monuments, foundations, national and international NGOs, including the A. G. Leventis Foundation, the World Monument Fund, the Headley Trust and the Messerschmidt foundation.

In addition to the seven UNESCO recognised cultural monuments of world significance, there are almost 40 000 of all other categories in Bulgaria. Cultural heritage has been protected since the founding of the Bulgarian state, but in recent years landmark urban buildings have been demolished – a result of, among other things, a lack of clear responsibilities of individual ministries, municipalities and other authorities in the *Cultural Heritage Act*. This has sparked public discontent and media debate on the topic. In order to have better management of the cultural heritage in the coming years, it is necessary to create a strategy for the cultural heritage, as well as to digitise the National Documentary Archive.

The Ministry of Culture also pursues a policy on the intangible cultural heritage through a specialized programme. The programme is related to the Bulgarian implementation of the UNESCO *Convention on the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*. On November 10, 2017 the Director-General of UNESCO Ms. Irina Bokova and the Minister of Culture of the Republic of Bulgaria Mr. Boil Banov signed the [Agreement regarding the continuation in Sofia \(Bulgaria\) of the Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe under the auspices of UNESCO](#). This Agreement is concluded for a period of six years as from its entry into force.

In 2016, the technical preparation and implementation of the register of the intangible cultural heritage, related to providing an opportunity for promotion of the intangible cultural heritage and the national system "Living Human Treasures - Bulgaria", begins. The register www.bulgariaich.com is interconnected with an inventory of the intangible cultural heritage: [Living Human Treasures - Bulgaria](#) and [Folk-Art Fairs](#).

3.2. Archives and libraries

In 2009, a *Public Libraries Act* was adopted. The law regulates the conditions that public libraries need to meet, their financing, their governance and interaction in a national network. Unified standards for the work of the libraries and for the services they provide were introduced. The National Library Council of the Ministry of Culture should prepare strategies for the development of library activities, conservation measures for funds and for civic access to cultural heritage.

A rich library infrastructure has been created and operates in the country. According to the information provided by the Ministry of Culture, there are 27 libraries operating in the regional centres at the regional level. Three thousand libraries within a *chitalishte* (a typical Bulgarian public institution with several cultural functions at once) are building the network of public libraries in Bulgaria. There are also libraries in universities, scientific

units, and schools. As of October 2012, there are at least 3 500 libraries in the country.

Global Libraries - Bulgaria (Bulgarian Libraries: A Place for Access to Information and Communication for Everyone) is a support program for the libraries in Bulgaria at the Ministry of Culture. In 2016, BGN 300,000 was allocated to it. This is the state's share of the Bill and Melinda Gates programme.

An important project for digitalisation in Bulgaria was launched in 2009: NALIS Foundation's National Academic Library Information System. The NALIS Union Catalogue is unique for Bulgaria: "the catalogue allows searching through a single platform and permits retrieving titles among nearly 3.6 million bibliographic records from the electronic catalogues of over 45 libraries in Bulgaria: it also grants access to full-text documents which are integrated into it thorough the NALIS repository. All this makes it the National catalogue of Bulgaria." (for 2018)

3.3. Performing arts

Theatres in Bulgaria are owned by the state, municipalities and private parties. Private owners may be registered under the law of commerce, but they can also be a non-profit organisation. In 2011, state theatres switched to the delegated budget system. Since then, the Ministry of Culture has several methodologies that determine how subsidies are formed for individual organisations. This environment of continuous reform does not create an opportunity for sustainable organisational development.

Private theatres can receive state support on a project basis. This is done through participation in competitive sessions announced by the Ministry of Culture.

Number and type of stage organisations (state and municipal by ownership)

Year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Theatres total	74	75	72	75	75	74	75
Drama theatre	38	36	35	37	36	35	36
Opera and ballet	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
Operetta theatre	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Puppet theatre	21	24	22	22	23	23	23
Drama-puppet theatre	6	6	6	7	7	7	7

Source: National Statistical Institute

3.4. Visual arts and crafts

In the state and municipal museums and galleries, the main problem is the lack of funds for new purchases and expansion of museum collections.

Number of museums (state and municipal)

Year	Number
2018	174

2017	191
2016	195
2015	201
2014	204
2013	187

Source: National Statistical Institute

There are a large number of associations in the field of visual arts in Bulgaria. they are active participants in the cultural life of the country. In recent years, the free (not subsidised) urban scene has been particularly active.

Numerous private galleries have emerged, a number of festivals have appeared and developed successfully. With the new law on cultural heritage, the first two private museums have appeared.

3.5. Cultural arts and creative industries

3.5.1. GENERAL DEVELOPMENTS

Data about cultural and creative industries (CCI) are based on the annual empirical survey on the mapping of CCI conducted by the Observatory of Cultural Economics - Sofia. The survey covers the period 2008-2015, which allows the emergence of major trends in the development of the CCI in Bulgaria. The aim is not only to assess the economic contribution, but also the characteristics of CCI in Bulgaria as market sectors by analysing economic growth, employment and investment. In this respect, the research also addresses the different stages of creating the value of the product from idea to consuming, the analysis reflecting the management of the process and the role of the state.

The set of data is based on: Data on the projects - Analysis and methodological framework of the cultural and creative industries in Sofia, 2010-2011. Research project in partnership between the [Observatory on Culture Economics](#), Sofia Municipality and the National Statistical Institute, and the project Sofia City of Creative Economy, 2016-2017-2018 (again in partnership). The aim is to prove and access economic contribution of the arts, cultural, creative industries and cultural tourism in Sofia and Bulgaria.

The methodology in practice in Bulgaria is based on the mapping study of the arts, cultural, creative industries and cultural tourism that reflect the established European practices of the national specificity of the cultural sector.

ARTS AND HERITAGE
Visual arts
Stage arts
Cultural Heritage
Artistic Crafts
CULTURAL INDUSTRIES
Music industry
Book publishing

Print media
Film industry
Radio, television and new media
Software and video games
CREATIVE INDUSTRIES
Design
Architecture
Ad Market
RELATED ACTIVITIES
Cultural tourism

The methodology is based on the EUROSTAT approach, i.e. the data are comparable. The approach to shaping the scope of the arts, the cultural and creative industries, follows the recommendations of the Leadership Group on Cultural Statistics reflected in the European Statistical System Network on Culture.

For almost a decade, the Observatory of Cultural Economics, supported by the Sofia Municipality, carries out an annual mapping of the arts, cultural and creative industries in Sofia. The results are extremely indicative - economic growth in the sector of 4.5%, employment - 4.1%, and every tenth enterprise in the city is part of the creative economy. We can summarize that the cultural and creative industries are an indisputable motor for the development of the city. Nowadays, this research is conducted annually and has created a database of research data and analyses with a time span from 2008 to 2015.

The data outlines Sofia as a national centre of cultural and creative industries (CCI). The main indicators of the economic importance of CCIs - value added, the employed, turnover, the number of enterprises, and direct foreign investment, show a concentration of between 49% and 92% in the city. Every tenth enterprise in the capital is a creative economy enterprise, whereby the period under observation showed an increase in employment in the sphere and dynamics exceeding the average growth of the employed in the capital.

These annual surveys have enabled management decisions made on the basis of real information on available resources and constraints, i.e. to develop "informed policies", not only in the field of culture, but because of the mixed nature of CCIs, we are already talking about common policies between the cultural sector, education, and industry, for example:

The beginning of a more effective cultural management was established. The results of the first stage of the project became an essential part of Sofia's Cultural Strategy ([Sofia-Creative Capital](#)) Provided an institutional opportunity to develop business models based on a partnership between economy and culture. The adopted methodological scope of the CCI was also adopted by the Ministry of Economy in the rendering of the activity "Promotion of cultural and creative industries" in the Operational Programme "Innovation and Competitiveness" for 2014-2020, Priority Axis 2: Entrepreneurship and Capacity for growth of SMEs. The initial steps to introduce new forms of financing, which also reflects the serious turnover generated in the sector were made. In the strategy for the film industry of Sofia, alternative financial instruments such as investment fund and bank guarantees, with which Sofia will support its film industry appeared for the first time.

Indicators at national level regarding cultural and creative industries

Cultural employment (% of total employment) – 3,71%

Value added in cultural sectors (% of value added in total services): All cultural sectors – 4,5%

Exports of cultural goods - 94 mln BGN

Imports of cultural goods – 120 mln BGN

3.5.2. BOOKS AND PRESS

Book publishing in Bulgaria is a private business. The state supports the industry through the Book Help Programme, but only in the case of individual publications that are either particularly expensive or valuable to the public. In 2018, 67 books were supported with this programme. Publishers can apply for a project grant to the Ministry of Culture. Support for specialised publications can be obtained from the National Culture Fund.

3.5.3. AUDIOVISUAL AND INTERACTIVE MEDIA

Film investors

The state is a major investor for the Bulgarian film industry through the National Film Centre. According to the National Film Center in 2016, the public funding for the Bulgarian film industry in 2015 was around EUR 6,750,000 (BGN 13,200,000). Other investors with a total sum of less than one million euro were the Bulgarian National Television, the National Culture Fund (support for film debuts) and the Municipality Cultural Programme of Sofia. Market funds in the budget of film projects in Bulgaria come from the prior sale of the distribution rights of a film.

Producers

The producers' market consists mainly of micro-companies. More than 700 independent producers are registered, but less than 10% of them have managed permanent employment through winning a project.

The Bulgarian film industry had a positive eight-year dynamic for the period 2008-2015, under the observed economic indicators:

- Added value – 138.1%.
- Organisations – 94.45%.
- Increase of employed and hired personnel – 71.8% and 71.4%.
- Direct foreign investments – 81.5%.

The remarkable results also contrasted with the trends in the Bulgarian economy during part of this period: recession, decline in employment and increase in unemployment, negative economic growth at the beginning of the period 2009-2010, and an economic growth of less than 1% for the period 2011-2012.

3.5.4. MUSIC

Information is currently not available.

3.5.5. DESIGN AND CREATIVE SERVICES

Until 1989, the state had a centralised design policy with multiple centres for fashion design, industrial design, and more. In recent years, this sector has been absolutely market-driven, developing without state-level dynamic support, and is among the top three sectors in the value-added cultural and creative industries.

One of the important design events in Bulgaria is ONE DESIGN WEEK. This is an international festival of design and visual culture which takes place in the city of Plovdiv every June. Its programme includes a professional forum with distinguished names from around the world and an extensive programme of events aimed at the broader audience – including exhibitions, workshops, discussions, talks, screenings, parties and a kids programme. The festival's first edition was in 2009 and it has been successful ever since.

3.5.6. CULTURAL AND CREATIVE TOURISM

According to the satellite balance for culture of the NSI (2016), which monitors the expenditures of tourists: Services related to cultural events (ie cultural tourism) have generated income from foreigners - BGN 656.00 million and from Bulgarian citizens - BGN 108.90 million. 764.9 million BGN.

4. Law and legislation

4.1. General legislation

4.1.1. CONSTITUTION

Texts from the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria (1991), which directly refer to the cultural field, are the following:

Article 3

Bulgarian shall be the official language of the Republic.

Article 13

(1) The practicing of any religion shall be free.

(2) The religious institutions shall be separate from the state.

Article 18

(1) The state shall enjoy exclusive ownership rights over the nether of the earth; the coastal beaches; the national thoroughfares, as well as over waters, forests and parks of national importance, and the natural and archaeological reserves established by law.

Article 23

The state shall establish conditions conducive to the free development of science, education and the arts, and shall assist that development. It shall organise the conservation of all national monuments of history and culture.

Article 36

(1) The study and use of the Bulgarian language shall be a right and an obligation of every Bulgarian citizen.

(2) Citizens whose mother tongue is not Bulgarian shall have the right to study their own language alongside the compulsory study of the Bulgarian language.

Article 39

(1) Everyone shall be entitled to express an opinion or to publicise it through words, written or oral, sound or image, or in any other way.

(2) This right shall not be used to the detriment of the rights and reputation of others, or for the incitement of a forcible change of the constitutionally established order, the perpetration of a crime, or the incitement of enmity

or violence against anyone.

Article 40

(1) The press and the other mass information media shall be free and not be subjected to censorship.

(2) An injunction on, or a confiscation of printed matter or another information medium shall be allowed only through an act of the judicial authorities in the case of an encroachment on public decency or incitement of a forcible change of the constitutionally established order, the perpetration of a crime, or the incitement of violence against anyone. An injunction suspension shall lose force if not followed by a confiscation within 24 hours.

Article 54

(1) Everyone shall have the right to avail himself of the national and universal human cultural values and to develop his own culture in accordance with his ethnic self-identification, which shall be recognised and guaranteed by the law.

(2) Artistic, scientific and technological creativity shall be recognised and guaranteed by the law.

(3) The state shall protect all inventors' rights, copyrights and related rights.

4.1.2. ALLOCATION OF PUBLIC FUNDS

In the Republic of Bulgaria, the municipality is the main administrative territorial unit, of local self-government. The Municipal Council is the main authority. Representatives are elected from their respective constituencies for a period of four years.

At the end of 2002, the first regulatory steps were taken to normalise the financial decentralisation of public services, to be carried out by the municipalities including cultural activities. The main aim was to increase local income and a maximum level of local autonomy as well as to define the character and content of municipal services.

Upon Decree of the Council of Ministers (No.°16/2003), all public services were divided into two groups:

1. Activities delegated from the state in the fields of education, healthcare, social affairs and partially in the field of culture. Minimal standards have been adopted regarding the number of staff, amount of salaries, insurances and maintenance of buildings. The state is responsible for their financing through assigned taxes and for providing supplementary subsidies in cases when municipal funds are not sufficient to meet these standards; and
2. Local activities including public utilities, sanitation, kindergartens and most activities in the field of culture. Financing is generated from local taxes and charges, property management, fines, etc. Those municipalities with a low capacity to generate their own income receive compensation subsidies. Investments are financed through grants which are within the realm of government priorities and objectives.

2003 was the first year that this division of labour was realised and this was seen as a serious step forward to

strengthen local self-government and to overcome problems of the individual municipalities.

In 2016, the *Decentralisation Strategy 2016-2025* by the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works was adopted. It provides measures to develop decentralisation at national, regional and local level. The strategy also focuses on the cultural sector. The state cultural institutes are financed from the budget of the Ministry of Culture in whole or in part, with funds from the municipal budgets on the basis of concluding contracts with the department or with the participation of legal entities or people.

4.1.3. SOCIAL SECURITY FRAMEWORKS

Social security for artists is regulated by the *Labour Code* and the *Ordinance on Social Security of Persons who Practice a Liberal Profession and of the Bulgarian Citizens Working Abroad* (2000). Under these laws, artists practising a liberal profession are treated equally with those who have registered companies as sole traders or partners in commercial corporations under the *Commercial Code*.

In both cases, the compulsory social security (last update as of 2019) contributions are:

- For people born before 1960 and operating as self-insured persons or companies, they pay a retirement insurance for all insurance risks of 23.3% of income of their choice. Those who are born after 1959 – 18.3%. The compulsory health insurance based on the income of their choice is 8%. The minimum income to be insured is BGN 560 (EUR 286) and the maximum income is BGN 3000 (EUR 1533). The statutory tax deductions are 60% of the declared income.
- Born before 1960, employed under a contract of employment and falling into category III labour (employees in a field with low work related risk) and their social security contribution, which includes a pension fund, general illness and maternity, and unemployment, the share is 24.3% of their income. For those born after 1959 the share is 19.3%. Compulsory health insurance based on the income on which they are insured is 8%, 4.8% is at the expense of the employer and 3.2% is personal.

Taking into consideration the unique nature of the work performed by artists, an amendment was made to the *Transitional and Final Provisions of the Protection and Development of Culture Act* (1999) which now entitles artists who have worked for at least four of the past twelve months (without entering into an employment relationship in artistic associations) to obtain unemployment benefits.

4.1.4. TAX LAWS

To encourage private persons and companies to sponsor the development of the arts and culture, a tax deduction is provided to resident and non-resident natural persons and legal entities. This amounts up to 10% for donations for cultural purposes, as well as for conservation and restoration of historical and cultural monuments, or for grants. The rate of tax deduction was increased from 5% to 10% under amendments to the *Corporate Income Tax Act* (2007) adopted at the beginning of 2002.

Artists pay taxes under the *Personal Income Tax Act* (2007), which allows them to deduct 50% of their expenses from taxable income received for the creation of works of art, science and culture, folk arts and crafts, and copyright royalties. Furthermore, taking into account the specificity of creative work, the legislation provides an opportunity for income averaging derived from creative work undertaken in the course of more than one year

(e.g. the writing of a book), but not exceeding four years. Artists thus avoid the progressive annual income tax.

There is a unified rate of VAT of 20% for everything in Bulgaria – including cultural goods and services. According to an amendment of the *VAT Act* (2007), under Article 42, the levy of VAT on the tickets for concerts, performances (excluding variety programmes, bars, clubs), museums, art galleries, zoo's, botanical gardens, architectural and archaeological sites is cancelled as of 2005. The same Article stipulates VAT exemption on activities carried out by the Bulgarian National Radio, Bulgarian National Television and Bulgarian News Agency, for which these institutions receive a subsidy from the state.

Since 2014, there is a debate going on in the National Assembly on a bill proposing some tax concessions which would support Bulgarian culture.

4.1.5. LABOUR LAWS

Please see chapter 4.1.3.

4.1.6. COPYRIGHT PROVISIONS

The *Copyright and Neighbouring Rights Act* (1993) protects a maximum range of copyright and neighbouring rights. In 1995, the Parliament ratified the Rome Convention and the Geneva Convention.

On 25 July 2002, the 39th National Assembly passed an Act to amend the *Copyright and Neighbouring Rights Act*, which brings Bulgarian legislation in line with its commitments regarding international agreements with the World Intellectual Property Organisation and the World Trade Organisation Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS).

Articles in Bulgaria's *Copyright and Neighbouring Rights Act* supplement and adjust the legal framework to include provisions on the fair use of works online and the introduction of new technologies. The purpose was to adjust copyright protection to the new environment and harmonise certain aspects related to regulations on the right to reproduce and distribute works via the Internet.

Legal protection is also provided to database producers. Producers are granted special rights on the original selection or arrangement of the database for a period of fifteen years. Special attention is also paid to organisations for collective copyright management. They have been assigned an increasing role in guaranteeing the observance and protection of copyright and neighbouring rights. Under Article 26 of the *Copyright and Neighbouring Rights Act*, royalties on recordings for personal use are payable to the organisations representing the different categories of copyright holders under the Act. Such organisations are also authorised to represent members in disputes of civil law.

According to the *Ordinance Establishing a Procedure and Terms for the Allocation of Funds from Fines Collected* under Article 97 of the *Copyright and Neighbouring Rights Act*, adopted by the Council of Ministers in 2002, 50% of the collected fines (for violating copyright) are transferred to the bank account of the Culture National Fund, and the remaining 50% to the Ministry of Culture budget. They are to be used for copyright protection.

By the end of 2005, some very important legislative acts, in the protection of the rights on intellectual property, were initiated by the Ministry of Culture and passed by the Parliament.

The *Act to Amend and Supplement the Copyright and Neighbouring Rights Act* was adopted. Thus, the regulation of two new directives of the European Union was incorporated into Bulgarian legislation, namely:

- *Directive 2001/84/EU* dated 27.09.2001, related to the right to resell original art works; and
- *Directive 2004/48/EU* dated 29.04.2004, related to implementation of rights regarding intellectual property.

The legislative changes also regulate, and in much more detail, the procedures for the legal administrative powers of those authorities within the Ministry of Culture, which are responsible for monitoring compliance in this field. The new legislation also increases the fines which are applicable for any violations.

The transposed directives entered into force with the accession of Bulgaria to the EU in 2007.

In September 2005, the *Act on Administrative Control on the Production and Trading of Optical Disks, Matrixes and Other Storage Media Containing Copies or Objectives of the Copy and Neighbouring Rights* was introduced. The law envisages clear and accurately written orders and conditions for obtaining the respective registration or licensing permission, as well as a very detailed mechanism for control, prevention and sanctions, which guarantees conformity with the law, both in execution, by the state bodies, of activities for the administration of these regimes, and in implementation of the regulated business activities.

As an EU Member State, Bulgaria is obliged to transpose into its national legislation the *Directive on Copyright in the Digital Single Market*. The deadline for this task is March 2021.

4.1.7. DATA PROTECTION LAWS

A *Law on the Protection of Personal Information* (Official Gazette No.°1/2002) regulates the protection of physical persons in the processing of personal data and the access to these data. The objective of the law is to guarantee the inviolability of persons and personal life, as well as to protect physical persons from illegal processing of personal data and to regulate access to such data. Under the provisions of this law, "personal data" is defined as "information about the physical person, which reveals his physical, mental, psychological, marital, economic, cultural or civil identity".

The *General Data Protection Regulation* came into force on May 25, 2018, after it was adopted in 2016. In Bulgaria, changes to the *Law on the Protection of Personal Information* were promulgated nearly a year later at the end of February 2019. There are registered breaches of GDPR in Bulgaria. The two biggest violations in the country so far are the breaches in the systems of the National Revenue Agency and OTP Bank.

4.1.8. LANGUAGE LAWS

Please see chapter 2.5.4.

4.1.9. OTHER AREAS OF GENERAL LEGISLATION

Information is currently not available.

4.2. Legislation on culture

4.2.1. GENERAL LEGISLATION ON CULTURE

The main law in the field of culture in Bulgaria is the *Law on Prevention and Development of Culture*. Another crucial law at the national level is the *Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria*, where the foundation of artists' freedoms is guaranteed.

There are three laws governing the specialised legislation in the country:

- *Law on the State Budget of the Republic of Bulgaria;*
- *Public Finance Act;*
- *State Aid Act and Rules for Implementation of the State Aid Act.*

In addition, there are eleven specific laws and acts in the field of culture covering the arts, cultural and creative industries, cultural heritage and cultural tourism:

- *Law on Protection and Development of Culture;*
- *Film Industry Act;*
- *Law on Radio and Television;*
- *Copyright and Neighbouring Rights Act;*
- *Cultural Heritage Act;*
- *National Chitalishte Act;*
- *Law on Public Libraries;*
- *Law on Patronage;*
- *“13th Century Bulgaria” Fund Act;*
- *Law on the Administrative Regulation of the Production and Trade of Optical Discs, Matrixes and Other Media Containing Copyright Objects and Related Rights;*
- *Compulsory Deposit of Copies of Printed and Other Works Act*

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

Title of the act	Year of adoption

UNESCO	
UNESCO World Heritage Convention (1972)	1974
Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (1954)	1956
Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (1970)	
Universal Copyright Convention (1952)	1974
Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003)	2006
UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005)	2007
Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage (2001)	2010
COUNCIL OF EUROPE	
European Cultural Convention (1954)	1991
Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (Granada, 1985)	1991
Convention for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage of Europe (1992)	1995
Europe Convention on Cinematographic Co-Production (1992)	2006
OTHER	
The Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU)	2007
Communication from the Commission on State aid for films and other audiovisual works (2013)	2013
Directive 2014/60/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 May 2014 on the return of cultural objects unlawfully removed from the territory of a Member State and amending Regulation (EU) No 1024/2012	2014
Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD) (2018)	2018
Council Regulation (EC) No 116/2009 of 18 December 2008 on the export of cultural goods	2009
Directive 97/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 June 1997	2007
Directive 2007/65/EC of the European parliament and the council of 11 December 2007	2007
Council Directive 89/552/EEC of 3 October 1989 on the coordination of certain provisions laid down by Law, Regulation or Administrative Action in Member States concerning the pursuit of television broadcasting activities	2007
Communication from the Commission - Guidelines on State aid to airports and airlines	2014
Directive 2001/29/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 May 2001 on the harmonisation of certain aspects of copyright and related rights in the information society	2007
Commission Directive 2002/77/EC of 16 September 2002 on competition in the markets for electronic communications networks and services	2007
Directive 2003/33/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 May 2003 on the approximation of the laws, regulations and administrative provisions of the Member States relating to the advertising and sponsorship of tobacco products	2007
Directive 2005/29/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 May 2005 concerning unfair business-to-consumer commercial practices in the internal market and amending Council Directive 84/450/EEC, Directives 97/7/EC, 98/27/EC and 2002/65/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council and Regulation (EC) No 2006/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council ('Unfair Commercial Practices Directive')	2007
Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament and the European Economic and Social Committee - Enhancing the enforcement of intellectual property rights in the internal market	2009
Directive 2010/13/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 March 2010 on the coordination of certain provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in Member States concerning the provision of audiovisual media services (Audiovisual Media Services Directive)	2010
Judgment of the EU Commercial Court (Case C-314/14)	

4.2.2. LEGISLATION ON CULTURE AND NATURAL HERITAGE

The Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria(1991) stipulates the commitment of the state to be responsible for the national cultural and historic heritage preservation. It stipulates that the natural and archaeological reserves

defined by law are exclusively owned by the state and guarantees the natural and irrevocable right to access to cultural heritage without discriminative restrictions of any ethnic-cultural and religious nature. The legislative framework of the cultural and historic heritage sector was defined by two main pieces of legislation. The state cultural policy's main principles are fixed in the *Protection and Development of Culture Act* (1999), which is a common legal Act for the entire field of culture.

The *Cultural Heritage Act* (2009), adopted by the Parliament in February 2009, replaced one of the most outdated operative regulations in the country: The *Law of Cultural Monuments and Museums* (1969). The *Culture Heritage Act* defines the main scope of cultural heritage and the main areas of its preservation and protection. The law introduced new categories of cultural heritage: "tangible and intangible, moveable and immovable, as bearers of historic memory, national identity and which have a scientific or cultural value" (Art. 2). The scope of cultural heritage has been enlarged to include intangible heritage, industrial heritage, underwater heritage, audio-visual heritage, landscapes etc., specified in Art. 6. It defines cultural values and stipulates equality of access, decentralisation and transparency of management, and protection of cultural heritage (Art. 2 and 3). It also introduced the national system of protection and preservation of cultural heritage and the different levels of management.

In 2019, the law was amended and the documents certifying the existence of the requirements of the *Cultural Heritage Act* (2009) for museum activity by private museums were regulated. In addition, the deadline for obtaining permission from the Minister of Culture was reduced. The requirements for the coordination of conservation and management plans, development plans and specific rules and requests for intervention in protected areas for the protection of cultural heritage were also regulated. Requirements for the issue of permits for the production of replicas and replicas of cultural values of national or world importance have been also added, as well as requirements for the conservation and restoration of movable cultural values.

4.2.3. LEGISLATION ON PERFORMANCE AND CELEBRATION

In 2010, there was a draft proposal of the *Performing Arts Law*, which recognised the multiple forms of performing arts making up the theatre network in Bulgaria. Under this proposed bill, equal treatment was to be given to all theatrical organisations when competing for project funding. It also outlined the shared rights and responsibilities of the state and local authorities in development of theatrical activities in Bulgaria. The law was ultimately not adopted, and the theatre sector in Bulgaria continues to press a public debate for its adoption.

4.2.4. LEGISLATION ON VISUAL ARTS AND CRAFTS

There is no special law on visual and / or applied arts in Bulgaria.

4.2.5. LEGISLATION ON BOOKS AND PRESS

In 2000, a new law was adopted regarding the obligatory depositing of copies of printed and other works. The objective of the law is to ensure the collection and preservation of copies of printed works; works circulated/disseminated by sound recordings; cine-film or electronic format stored by physical and juridical persons; and dissertations and research works qualifying for academic recognition. These can be works protected within the country and/or produced by Bulgarian citizens abroad. Orders, medals, badges and plaques, coins and bank-notes, post stamps designed for usage in the country are also included in the law. It also regulates the preservation of complete collections of works as part of the national cultural heritage,

ensuring public access to compulsory copies, as well as preparation, publishing, and dissemination of bibliographic information.

The *Copyright and Neighbouring Rights Act* (1993) defines public lending as "distribution of a work, which means the sale, exchange, donation, rental or lending, import and export, as well as the offer for sale or rental of any originals and copies of the work".

The *Public Libraries Act* (2009) regulates the conditions that public libraries need to meet, their financing, their governance and interaction in a national network. Unified standards for the work of the libraries and the services they provide are introduced.

The law envisages the creation of a National Library Council at the Ministry of Culture, which prepares strategies for the development of library activities, measures for the preservation of the funds and for citizen access to cultural heritage. The law envisages sanctions for those who lose, damage or destroy documents from the library fund and for officials who fail to secure conditions for their preservation.

In 2015, by order of the Minister of Culture, the *Standard for Library Information Services* has been approved. The document defines the conditions for the operation of public libraries in Bulgaria and it includes:

- Indicators for regional, municipal and community libraries;
- Indicators for measuring the effectiveness of library activity in public libraries;
- Indicators for the National Library St. St. Cyril and Methodius.

Although it has no legal basis, there is an *Ethics Charter for Bulgarian Publishers, Book Distributors, Literary Agents, Libraries and Translators*. It aims to contribute to the full access of society to information, education and cultural values, to ensure its right to satisfy intellectual and spiritual needs through works and services, created and offered by the book sector.

4.2.6. LEGISLATION ON AUDIOVISUAL AND INTERACTIVE MEDIA

The Film Industry Act

The current *Film Industry Act* was adopted in 2003. It addresses issues related to the production, distribution, promotion and screening of films in the country, as well as state support for the film industry. The law prioritises as a state policy:

- The right of public access to various forms of filmmaking;
- Protecting the rights and interests of viewers;
- Supporting new talent and young authors;
- Presentation of Bulgarian cinema in the country and abroad; and

- Creation of conditions for work of foreign film productions in Bulgaria.

With the implementation of the *Film Industry Act* (2003), the National Film Centre was founded, with an Executive Agency under the Minister of Culture. It operates the National Cinema Council, the National Arts Commission, the National Film Categorisation Commission, the National Technical Commission and the Finance Commission. The Act also regulates the licensing of film producers and cinemas.

The subsidy for the Agency is provided annually by *The Law on the State Budget of the Republic of Bulgaria*. According to the changes made in 2018, the annual amount of the subsidy cannot be less than the sum of the average budgets of the previous year for seven feature films, fourteen feature-length documentaries and 160 minutes of animation. It also provides funding for national festivals, organised by the Agency.

In November 2018, the National Assembly voted for amending the *Film Industry Act*. The regulation in the country was synchronised with the *Regulation 651/2014* of the European Commission concerning the allocation of state funding for cinema. The changes were made almost a year late – the National Film Center had a four-year period (from early 2014 to December 31st, 2017) to state new funding rules. Due to the delay, the National Film Centre was denied the right to allocate funds to already approved projects and Bulgarian cinema was threatened with having to record zero years.

One of the major changes is related to the distribution of Bulgarian films, as prescribed by the Regulation: distributors have to appear to a finance committee *and* an artistic committee. As in production, the goal is to guarantee the quality of the content.

Discussions are taking place in 2019 to reform the already outdated *Film Industry Act* (2003). Currently, there is a draft law that is expected to be adopted by the end 2019 and enter into force in 2020. The purpose of the changes is to attract more foreign production.

One of the ideas is to return 25%, or up to EUR 2.5 million, of the funds invested in Bulgaria to foreign producers. It is also envisaged that the national budget will allocate EUR 20 million for stimulation of cinema.

Media

In this moment, the 'analogue' *Law on Radio and Television* (1999) is still into force in Bulgaria. It sets the following programming quotas:

- At least 50% of the total annual programme time for European and Bulgarian programming, excluding newscasts, sports show, game shows on radio and TV, commercials and the radio and TV market, if possible.
- Bulgarian National Television must allocate at least 10% of the National Budget subsidies and Radio and Television Fund subsidies for the production of Bulgarian television films. Blank tape levies are regulated by Article 26 of the *Copyright and Neighbouring Rights Act* (1993). *Electronic Communications Act* (2007), which regulates the field related to communications via electronic means and the interrelations among the Communications Regulation Commission (CRC) and the Council of Electronic Media (CEM) in the area of digital radio broadcasting. It also regulates the individual licensing for broadcasting. .

The *Law on Radio and Television* is in line with the *European Directive 2007/65 / EC (Audiovisual Media Services*

Directive). The amendments extend the scope of the regulation to introduce the concept of 'audiovisual media services and radio services' and the mode of regulation of commercial communications.

In 2019, a debate took place to reform the *Law on Radio and Television* (1999). The idea is that it should include online websites as well. The changes are necessary because of the *European Audiovisual Media Services Directive*, adopted in 2018. Bulgaria has until September 2020 to transpose it into its national legislation.

4.2.7. LEGISLATION ON DESIGN AND CREATIVE SERVICES

The architectural sites and complexes, as well as art in the public space and landscape architecture fall within the scope of the *Cultural Heritage Act* (2009). In this law, immovable cultural values are divided into categories, including 'ensemble meaning'. It includes the spatial characteristics and architectural typology of the group value to which they belong. The section for the conservation of cultural property states that the restoration and conservation activities, as well as the adaptation of immovable cultural property, are carried out by persons with a specialisation in architecture with an additional specialisation in the specific field (such as urbanism and landscape architecture) and three years of professional experience in architecture and five years of professional experience in conservation and restoration in the field of immovable cultural heritage. It is also defined who prepares the conservation, restoration and adaptation projects.

Issues related to architecture, sites of cultural, historical, ethnographic and architectural significance are also included in *The Law on the Spatial Planning* (1977). It regulates the public relations related to the structure of the territory, the investment design and construction in the Republic of Bulgaria, and it defines the restrictions on the property for development purposes.

Advertising services in Bulgaria are not regulated by a separate law, but *The Law on Protection of Competition* (Articles 32, 33 and 34) defines misleading and comparative advertising and prohibits both types in the country. *The Law on Radio and Television* regulates the advertising of products such as cigarettes and alcohol on the air. In addition, time is set for advertising in the public and commercial media. There is also a separate sponsorship section for advertising.

5. Arts and cultural education

5.1. Policy and institutional overview

The responsibility for arts education is shared between two ministries – the Ministry of Culture, which is responsible for specialised arts secondary schools, and the Ministry of Science and Education, which is responsible for the schools of general education and their programmes in different arts sectors, as well as for higher level arts education.

Two types of arts education programmes are offered in Bulgaria: comprehensive arts education, which covers arts courses from grades one to twelve in all schools, and specialised arts education. The main orientation of comprehensive arts education programmes throughout the past several decades was towards the classical forms of arts. A contemporary concept of education in the arts and culture may begin to include avant-garde arts, cultural heritage, design, culture of the urban environment, photography and audio-visual arts in the overall curriculum. To great extent, this concept has been enacted. There is an introductory course on contemporary art forms provided in the compulsory programmes of fine arts and music for grade eight and grade nine in the secondary general education schools.

Specialised arts education offers continuous training in the arts at high-school (grades eight to twelve) and university levels. Students from specialised arts schools and university students of music and fine arts are studying webdesign and computer technologies.

In 2019, the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Culture In 2019, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Culture signed a [cooperation agreement](#). This document gives the opportunity to the kindergartens and schools to organise visits to state cultural institutes in the country. On the other hand, the cultural institutes are obligated to develop and submit projects for educational programmes, performances, concerts and other performing arts. The aim is to increase the interest of children and students in the Bulgarian identity, traditions, history and contemporary forms in the field of theatre, music and dance.

Since 2015, all students in tenth grade in Bulgaria take a National External Assessment of the Digital Competences. The exam tests information technology and informatics skills. This exam also applies to students in art schools.

At the end of the 2019/2020 school year, two mandatory National External Assessments (Bulgarian language and literature, and mathematics) for all students in tenth grade will be conducted for the first time. These students will be the first to graduate with the new curriculum, which has been developed by the Ministry of Science and Education in the last couple of years. The exams will assess the knowledge and skills of the first high school stage. In line with the *Law on Preschool and School Education* (2017), the secondary education has been divided into two stages. In the second stage, students will be able to specialise in a variety of fields, including arts and culture.

5.2. Arts in schools

In Bulgaria, special attention is paid to children who are gifted in the areas of science, art and sports. One-off financial aid, a total of three times the national minimum wage, is granted to children who come in first, second or third place during competitions, Olympiads or contests, in the area of arts, science and sports, at municipality, national or international level. Incentives for gifted children are also granted in the form of monthly scholarships, in the amount equal to 50% of the minimum salary in Bulgaria. This grant may be applied for by a child, a parent (or guardian), school director or social worker. Candidates are evaluated by expert commissions, and the funds for this programme are provided by the budget of the interested ministries for the relevant calendar year.

For 2018, the Ministry of Culture provided approximately 315 000 BGN for scholarships to gifted children.

According to the data of the Ministry of Culture, there are 23 secondary public schools for arts and culture in Bulgaria: ten of them are art schools that educate students in the professions of painter and designer; six are musical schools; and three are art schools. Bulgaria also has several specialised schools, such as the National School of Dance Art (Sofia), National High School of Ancient Languages and Cultures Constantine-Cyril Philosopher (Sofia), National Cultural Complex with Lyceum for studying Italian and Culture (Gorna Banya) and National High School of Polygraphy and Photography (Sofia). There is a concentration of art schools in the capital of Bulgaria.

Only two schools with a profile related to arts and culture are enrolled in the Bulgarian Association of Private Schools: Private School for Dance Arts Galina Sergeyevna Ulanova and Private School of Arts and Foreign Languages Artis.

In terms of the curriculum in the country, there are subjects that are mandatory in general education, which are grouped into eight cultural and educational fields, including subjects in arts. Compulsory school classes may not exceed 32 hours per week.

The curriculum in vocational trainings for the acquisition of professional qualification in arts was approved by an order of the Ministry of Culture and an order of the Ministry of Education in 2017.

5.3. Higher arts and cultural education

Higher education in arts is offered by both public and private universities and colleges in Bulgaria. There are four specialised public universities in the field of arts education: Academy for Music, Dance and Fine Arts in Plovdiv, National Academy for Theatre and Film Arts Krastyo Sarafov in Sofia, National Music Academy Prof. Pancho Vladigerov in Sofia and National Arts Academy in Sofia. There are also private higher education institutions such as Theatre College Luben Groys in Sofia.

Several public and private universities offer courses in the field of culture and arts. For example, Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski has undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in fine art, music and dance, for example. The New Bulgarian University (private) has a special department in theatre and cinema.

As a country involved in building a common European space for higher education, Bulgaria, from the very beginning of the Bologna Process, supports and fulfils all the decisions adopted at the strategic progress levels. The objectives of the Bologna Process, and the resolutions resulting from the Ministers' meetings in Prague, Berlin and Bergen, are incorporated into national legislation.

The autonomous high schools incorporate the directions of the European common policy in their organisation and in the substance of their activities (e.g. the stage structure and the bi-cycle educational model have been implemented). In addition, the functional structure of the systems for internal and external quality evaluation is established; effective schemes for students' and lecturers' mobility have been implemented; the common European instruments for the provision of free competitiveness and maximum utilisation of academic students' development has been adopted – i.e. the system for accumulation and transfer of credits and the European diploma supplement.

Cultural heritage programmes are not concentrated in specialised higher education cultural institutions. Those courses are taught in both public and private universities and colleges. There are programmes that focus on cultural heritage from different perspectives – historical, management, social, tourism and others. This happens in the framework of undergraduate and master's programmes such as History and Cultural Heritage, Cultural and Historical Heritage (Cultural Tourism) and Management and Socialisation of Cultural Heritage.

The higher education in Bulgaria covers both arts-oriented programmes and others related to arts management, financial aspects, producing, cultural tourism and more.

5.4. Out-of-school arts and cultural education

There are no official data on how many people in Bulgaria visit trainings and out-of-school arts and cultural education programs.

During the *Fifth Seminar on Extracurricular and Out-of-school Activities for Sustainable and Quality Education, Upbringing and Development of Children and Students* in 2018, held under the patronage of the Ministry of Education and Science, data on out-of-school activities was presented. According to this data, there are 126 public out-of-school units in Bulgaria. They cover 65 000 children and students in out-of-school forms of education. The financing of these activities is determined annually by a decision of the Council of Ministers.

The national programme Ensuring Contemporary Educational Environment has as one of its goals to stimulate practical training in a real work environment and in accordance with modern new technologies. BGN 100,000 (EUR 51 116) of its total budget (BGN 9,230,000 / EUR 4 718 020) is dedicated to activities under the Museums as an Educational Environment Module. The idea is to enable students to spend part of their educational training in a museum, acquiring new knowledge in a different and attractive way. Beneficiaries of the programme are state and municipal schools, as well as the National Museum of Education - Gabrovo. The maximum amount for financial support of a school project is BGN 2,500 (EUR 1 277). The funds can be used as entrance tickets, class fees, virtual tours and video lessons, for materials offered by the museums for activities during the lessons (not included in the entrance tickets), as well as transport to the museum.

Private lessons

In 2020, the average gross salary of teachers will increase by 20%, with similar increases made in the previous two years. Due to the low payment in the sector, many teachers were forced to work privately before these changes. It is common practice for students to have private lessons to prepare themselves for the next stage of their education, such as when they apply to study in high school or university. The percentage of public school teachers giving private lessons is high, but there are no official data.

There are no official statistics for out-of-school lessons because it is not regulated. The interpretation of the concept of “private lessons” is unclear as there is no definition of it in the VAT Act.

5.5. Vocational and professional training

There is an *Ordinance on State Requirements for the Acquisition of Professional Qualification “Teacher”*, adopted in 2016 and entered into force for the 2017/2018 school year. The document defines that vocational and professional qualification “teacher” is acquired after completion of higher education in pedagogical specialty. Higher education institutions eligible to offer such programmes have received accreditation in the professional field of the Pedagogical Sciences field or in a professional field corresponding to a school subject according to the classifier of the fields of higher education and vocational direction. Part of the curriculum includes teaching methods in specialised subjects, including fine arts and music. The graduates of a pedagogical programme at an Bulgarian university can be employed as teachers in all stages of elementary, primary and secondary education. The only professional qualifications in the cultural field are as a music teacher and a teacher of fine arts.

6. Cultural participation and consumption

6.1. Policies and programmes

According to the *Law on the Protection and Development of Culture*, the Minister of Culture is in charge of preparing and submitting for approval to the Council of Ministers a draft tariff for the fees that cultural institutes may collect. At the same time, all state cultural institutes offer discounts on ticket prices or free admission for children and young people under the age of 16-18, retirees, and disadvantaged people.

According to [data from the National Statistics Institute](#) a total of 5 084 387 people have visited Bulgarian museums in 2018, 1 024 552 of those visits have been free of charge.

Currently, there are several key programmes in Bulgaria that promote cultural participation and consumption in the country.

Traditionally, [Sofia's Culture Programme](#) supports projects aimed at developing audiences. In the period 2019-2020, the programme prioritizes its Access to Culture programme and funds cultural projects that focus on topics that provoke the interest of specific audiences. In addition, projects providing preferential conditions for attracting specialised audiences and/or partnering with schools, social services, specialised institutions and other disadvantaged organisations will be supported. One of the goals of the programme is to include people who live outside the city centre and traditionally have much lower access to cultural life in the capital. The funds distributed under the Culture Programme in Sofia come from the municipal budget.

On the other hand, there is the [National Culture Fund](#), whose funds are raised mainly from the state budget. Over the years, NFC has continued to fund projects in all areas of the arts and culture that address social issues and causes, or implement a creative process to engage and engage diverse audiences.

The programme Cultural Entrepreneurship, Heritage and Cooperation, funded under the *European Economic Area Financial Mechanism 2014-2021*, is currently running. Among its foreseen results is improved access to culture and the arts.

Tourist maps, including opportunities for sightseeing, access to public transport and more, are not popular in Bulgaria. For example, a metropolitan municipality does not offer such a service.

In 2019, the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Education signed an agreement that students in grades one through ten were allowed to go to the theatre for free (see chapter 5.1). Schools and kindergartens have to submit requests for desired visits, which happens when applying for a special programme. Each school has the right to participate with one project worth BGN 2500 (EUR 1277). Within the framework of the agreement, the actors will visit the schools to present literary works to students.

In 2018, a similar agreement was signed by the two ministries, but in the fields of museums, galleries and cultural heritage. According to this agreement, museums and art galleries can hold classes, covering state, regional and municipal cultural institutes in the field. The document provides for the creation and introduction of museum education programmes. These programmes are also announced on the websites of museums and

galleries at the beginning of each school year. The purpose of both ministries is to make these programmes part of general education training and the extracurricular activities.

The Ministry of Culture [indicated](#) that such a document was being produced as a draft in the field of libraries as well in 2018.

6.2. Trends and figures in cultural participation

A sociological survey on "Public Opinion on Cultural Life, the Status of Artists and Cultural Reform" conducted in 1997 found that an insignificant proportion of Bulgaria's population (from 0.3% to 6% depending on the particular art form) participate in the traditional forms of cultural life several times a month. If we add the proportion of those who attend an art event once every few months, we will get a relatively stable group of about 10% to 15% of the population with comparatively active rates of participation in cultural life. Those who never go to the cinema, theatre, opera, concert or art exhibition comprise between 70% and 88% (depending on the particular art form) of the population. The majority (56% of the population) own 100 to 500 books, 6% to 7% are active book collectors, and 74% could not quote the name of the author or title of the last book they bought.

During the last 10 years, the number of young readers in Bulgaria increased by 15%, according to analysis of reading habits carried out in November 2004 by the sociological agency "ASSA-M" and commissioned by the Association "Bulgarian Books" and the National Book Centre under the Ministry of Culture. This study also indicated that 41% of the public do not read and had not purchased a book in the previous three months. Of the reading public, only 41% purchased books from bookshops and the remainder had received their books from friends.

In February 2005 the National Centre for Research on Public Opinion carried out a study on "Cultural attitudes and consumption of cultural products in Bulgaria". The study is representative at national level and it was carried out by the method of semi-standardised interviews. This is the first integral analysis for 15 years which is devoted to national cultural preferences and values, to the frequency, motivation and restraints in the demand for cultural products and services, as well as the role of education in this process. The study demonstrated that the main national leisure pursuit is watching TV - 57.4% of those interviewed. The next preferences are book reading (8%), listening to music (6%), and in this respect young people under 30 years of age are the leading group. Only 1.4% of the population visits the theatre, movies, opera, ballet, or exhibitions on a regular basis.

At the same time, 10.4% expressed an interest in visiting the theatre, concerts, opera, ballet and exhibitions - i.e. the difference between the real and the potential audience is 1:10. The main reasons given by interviewees for not pursuing leisure activities of personal interest to them were financial restrictions - 42%, lack of free time - 16%, and tiredness at the end of the day - 14%. However, when interviewees were asked for the reasons for not attending cultural events, the financial restraints are rated only in third place (14%) i.e. the price of the tickets is not the most important barrier. The reluctance to visit arts events is formed at an earlier stage and is defined by arguments such as "people from my social environment don't visit these places" - 32%, followed by "I feel unprepared for this type of cultural entertainment" - 17%. Therefore, the leading factor in low participation rates is more related to socio-cultural factors, such as family, friends, and the environment.

The role of education at a young age is a determining factor for development of the future consumer-connoisseur. When analysing the data from this study, the researcher Biljana Tomova draws the following

conclusion: "The observed reduction in demand for cultural products and services over a period longer than a decade and the more and more restricted access of households to various forms of cultural entertainment is nowadays moving on to a completely new stage - one generation is lost for Bulgarian culture."

There are no surveys monitoring the participation of national minority groups or immigrant groups in cultural life.

Cultural participation in its traditional forms is obviously declining. There are two main reasons for this: economic hardship and a massive swing towards newer and more individualised forms of dissemination of culture: TV, video, cable, satellite. This distinct trend is associated with substantial changes not only in the frequency, but also in the forms, standards, and criteria of cultural participation.

In 2008, the National Statistical Institute carried out empirical research on "Participation of the population aged 25 - 64 in cultural activities and events" with EUROSTAT methodology. The results were published in 2009 and can be viewed in the tables below.

The empirical research encompasses frequenting of live performances, screenings, cultural landmarks, taking pictures, production of film and video recordings, creation of black and white drawings, sculptures and printing, composing poems, prose and short stories, taking part in creation of theater plays, number of book read and number of book owned by a single household, number of newspapers read, attending amateur companies, practicing different hobbies, membership in associations, specific clubs.

The analysis finds out that of all cultural activities that were monitored reading newspapers is the predominant activity for 89% of the respondents, as 44.7% of them practice it daily or in two days time. Reading books is the second cultural activity most preferred for 52% of the Bulgarian respondents, as more than the half of them have read up to 6 books lifetime. 39.9% of the respondents prefer to attend to live performances, as the greatest number of visits amount to 3 visits per year. Next come visits to cultural landmarks chosen by 29.7% of the respondents, followed by attending cinema screenings - 19.1% and taking pictures, production of film and video recordings. The cultural activities which are most popular with the population are the participations in public performances - 3.5%, creation of black and white drawings, sculptures and printing - 3.1%, composing poems, prose and short stories - 1.1%. Briefly - all these activities that require personal commitment. The finding is that the respondents prefer to be consumers of cultural activities but not to be their authors even when the point is the amateur art.

Table 16: Attendance at live performances, by age, gender, education, labour status and residence, 2007

		Total	1-3 times in the last 12 months		4-6 times in the last 12 months		7-12 times in the last 12 months		More than 12 times in the last 12 months		No visits in the last 12 months	
		Number	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Sex	Total	4 295 030	1 195 052	27.8	337 263	7.9	109 261	2.5	70 001	1.6	2 583 453	60.1
	Male	2 120 002	552 873	26.1	121 127	5.7	42 212	2.0	22 283	1.1	1 381 507	65.2
	Female	2 175 027	642 178	29.5	216 136	9.9	67 049	3.1	47 718	2.2	1 201 946	55.3

		Total	1-3 times in the last 12 months		4-6 times in the last 12 months		7-12 times in the last 12 months		More than 12 times in the last 12 months		No visits in the last 12 months	
		Number	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Age	25-34	1 141 616	366 515	32.1	120 501	10.6	39 886	3.5	23 247	2.0	591 466	51.8
	35-54	2 127 408	594 599	27.9	153 512	7.2	51 209	2.4	31 099	1.5	1 296 990	61.0
	55-64	1 026 006	233 938	22.8	63 250	6.2	18 166	1.8	15 655	1.5	694 997	67.7
Educational attainment	Basic education or below	1 039 266	177 358	17.1	12 963	1.2	3 244	0.3	1 610	0.2	844 090	81.2
	Upper secondary education	2 284 298	636 681	27.9	158 142	6.9	41 150	1.8	23 655	1.0	1 424 670	62.4
	Tertiary education	971 466	381 013	39.2	166 159	17.1	64 866	6.7	44 735	4.6	314 693	32.4
Labour status	Employed	2 929 552	914 209	31.2	279 354	9.5	93 978	3.2	56 894	1.9	1 585 117	54.1
	Unemployed	604 843	117 121	19.4	23 726	3.9	4 798	0.8	4 891	0.8	454 307	75.1
	Inactive	760 635	163 722	21.5	34 183	4.5	10 485	1.4	8 215	1.1	544 030	71.5
Residence	Urban	3 172 067	955 272	30.1	308 478	9.7	99 349	3.1	61 418	1.9	1 747 551	55.1
	Rural	1 122 962	239 780	21.4	28 786	2.6	9 912	0.9	8 583	0.8	835 902	74.4

¹According to the opinion of the interviewees, not by ILO definitions, so people, who do not have a job and do not search for one are self-assessed as unemployed, not as inactive.

Table 17: Visits to the cinema, by age, gender, education, labour status and residence, 2007

		Total	1-3 times in the last 12 months		4-6 times in the last 12 months		7-12 times in the last 12 months		More than 12 times in the last 12 months		No visits in the last 12 months	
		Number	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Sex	Total	4 295 030	469 844	10.9	165 225	3.8	78 069	1.8	66 377	1.5	3 515 514	81.9
	Male	2 120 002	219 811	10.4	88 284	4.2	38 286	1.8	33 163	1.6	1 740 459	82.1
	Female	2 175 027	250 034	11.5	76 941	3.5	39 784	1.8	33 214	1.5	1 775 055	81.6
Age	25-34	1 141 616	193 414	16.9	89 313	7.8	45 476	4.0	46 569	4.1	766 844	67.2
	35-54	2 127 408	221 236	10.4	62 770	3.0	25 079	1.2	18 549	0.9	1 799 775	84.6
	55-64	1 026 006	55 195	5.4	13 142	1.3	7 515	0.7	1 258	0.1	948 895	92.5
Educational attainment	Basic education or below	1 039 266	31 638	3.0	1 508	0.1	2 551	0.2	-	-	1 003 569	96.6
	Upper secondary education	2 284 298	246 561	10.8	78 621	3.4	30 521	1.3	27 653	1.2	1 900 942	83.2
	Tertiary education	971 466	191 645	19.7	85 097	8.8	44 998	4.6	38 723	4.0	611 003	62.9
Labour status	2 929 552	380 804	13.0	136 568	4.7	66 452	2.3	47 629	1.6	2 298 099	78.4	
	Unemployed	604 843	38 069	6.3	5 646	0.9	5 378	0.9	8 146	1.3	547 605	90.5
	Inactive	760 635	50 972	6.7	23 012	3.0	6 239	0.8	10 602	1.4	669 811	88.1
Residence	Urban	3 172 067	413 714	13.0	153 726	4.8	73 815	2.3	64 534	2.0	2 466 278	77.7
	Rural	1 122 962	56 130	5.0	11 499	1.0	4 254	0.4	1 843	0.2	1 049 235	93.4

¹According to the opinion of the interviewees, not by ILO definitions, so people, who do not have a job and do

not search for one are self-assessed as unemployed, not as inactive.

Table 18: Visits to cultural sites, by age, gender, education, labour status and residence, 2007

		Total	1-3 times in the last 12 months		4-6 times in the last 12 months		7-12 times in the last 12 months		More than 12 times in the last 12 months		No visits in the last 12 months	
		Number	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Sex	Total	4 295 030	947 486	22.1	207 809	4.8	64 058	1.5	57 842	1.3	3 017 835	70.3
	Male	2 120 002	427 668	20.2	88 227	4.2	23 856	1.1	24 232	1.1	1 556 019	73.4
	Female	2 175 027	519 818	23.9	119 582	5.5	40 202	1.8	33 609	1.5	1 461 816	67.2
Age	25-34	1 141 616	282 475	24.7	67 079	5.9	19 708	1.7	20 527	1.8	751 826	65.9
	35-54	2 127 408	465 610	21.9	109 081	5.1	34 111	1.6	28 450	1.3	1 490 156	70.0
	55-64	1 026 006	199 401	19.4	31 649	3.1	10 238	1.0	8 865	0.9	775 853	75.6
Educational attainment	Basic education or below	1 039 266	75 759	7.3	2 375	0.2	-	-	2 733	0.3	958 399	92.2
	Upper secondary education	2 284 298	510 358	22.3	88 304	3.9	16 952	0.7	18 787	0.8	1 649 897	72.2
	Tertiary education	971 466	361 369	37.2	117 130	12.1	47 106	4.8	36 322	3.7	409 539	42.2
Labour status	Employed	2 929 552	736 859	25.2	176 445	6.0	54 469	1.9	50 720	1.7	1 911 059	65.2
	Unemployed	604 843	66 697	11.0	10 323	1.7	5 213	0.9	1 385	0.2	521 224	86.2
	Inactive	760 635	143 930	18.9	21 041	2.8	4 376	0.6	5 736	0.8	585 552	77.0
Residence	Urban	3 172 067	777 338	24.5	188 422	5.9	61 188	1.9	53 027	1.7	2 092 092	66.0
	Rural	1 122 962	170 149	15.2	19 387	1.7	2 869	0.3	4 814	0.4	925 743	82.4

¹According to the opinion of the interviewees, not by ILO definitions, so people, who do not have a job and do not search for one are self-assessed as unemployed, not as inactive.

Table 19: Artists taking photographs, making movies, recording videotapes, by age, gender, education, labour status and residence, 2007

		Total	Taking photographs, making movies or recording of videotapes in the last 12 months - Yes		Taking photographs, making movies or recording in the last 12 months of videotapes - No	
		Number	Number	%	Number	%
Sex	Total	4 295 030	817 393	19.0	3 477 636	81.0
	Male	2 120 002	465 354	22.0	1 654 648	78.0
	Female	2 175 027	352 039	16.2	1 822 988	83.8
Age	25-34	1 141 616	345 113	30.2	796 502	69.8
	35-54	2 127 408	388 528	18.3	1 738 881	81.7
	55-64	1 026 006	83 753	8.2	942 253	91.8
Educational attainment	Basic education or below	1 039 266	38 031	3.7	1 001 234	96.3
	Upper secondary education	2 284 298	412 668	18.1	1 871 630	81.9
	Tertiary education	971 466	366 694	37.7	604 772	62.3

Labour status	Employed	2 929 552 703 341	24.0	2 226 211	76.0
	Unemployed	604 843 40 028	6.6	564 815	93.4
	Inactive	760 635 74 024	9.7	686 611	90.3
Residence	Urban	3 172 067 730 747	23.0	2 441 320	77.0
	Rural	1 122 962 86 646	7.7	1 036 316	92.3

Table 20: Visual artists - painting, drawing, sculpture or print-making aged 25-64, by age, gender, education, labour status and residence, 2007

		Total	Painting, drawing, sculpture or printing in the last 12 months - Yes		Painting, drawing, sculpture or printing in the last 12 months of videotapes - No	
		Number	Number	%	Number	%
Sex	Total	4 295 030	134 845	3.1	4 160 184	96.9
	Male	2 120 002	50 826	2.4	2 069 176	97.6
	Female	2 175 027	84 019	3.9	2 091 008	96.1
Age	25-34	1 141 616	59 696	5.2	1 081 919	94.8
	35-54	2 127 408	58 826	2.8	2 068 582	97.2
	55-64	1 026 006	16 322	1.6	1 009 683	98.4
Educational attainment	Basic education or below	1 039 266	2 412	0.2	1 036 854	99.8
	Upper secondary education	2 284 298	45 376	2.0	2 238 922	98.0
Labour status	Tertiary education	971 466	87 057	9.0	884 408	91.0
	Employed	2 929 552	117 821	4.0	2 811 731	96.0
	Unemployed	604 843	866	0.1	603 977	99.9
	Inactive	760 635	16 159	2.1	744 476	97.9
Residence	Urban	3 172 067	119 926	3.8	3 052 141	96.2
	Rural	1 122 962	14 919	1.3	1 108 043	98.7

Table 21: Writers of prose, poems, short stories aged 25-64, by age, gender, education, labour status and residence, 2007

		Total	Writing prose, poems, short stories in the last 12 months - Yes		Writing prose, poems, short stories in the last 12 months - No	
		Number	Number	%	Number	%
Sex	Total	4 295 030	48 216	1.1	4 246 813	98.9
	Male	2 120 002	16 684	0.8	2 103 319	99.2
	Female	2 175 027	31 533	1.4	2 143 494	98.6
Age	25-34	1 141 616	15 755	1.4	1 125 860	98.6
	35-54	2 127 408	20 337	1.0	2 107 072	99.0
	55-64	1 026 006	12 125	1.2	1 013 881	98.8
Educational attainment	Basic education or below	1 039 266	1 440	0.1	1 037 826	99.9
	Upper secondary education	2 284 298	16 056	0.7	2 268 242	99.3
	Tertiary education	971 466	30 720	3.2	940 746	96.8
Labour status	Employed	2 929 552	39 792	1.4	2 889 760	98.6
	Unemployed	604 843	3 803	0.6	601 040	99.4
	Inactive	760 635	4 621	0.6	756 013	99.4
Residence	Urban	3 172 067	40 948	1.3	3 131 119	98.7
	Rural	1 122 962	7 268	0.6	1 115 694	99.4

Table 22: Persons who participated in public performances, by gender, age, education, labour status and

residence, 2007

		Total	Personal participation in public performances in the last 12 months - Yes		Personal participation in public performances in the last 12 months - No	
		Number	Number	%	Number	%
Sex	Total	4 295 030	150 752	3.5	4 144 278	96.5
	Male	2 120 002	58 553	2.8	2 061 450	97.2
	Female	2 175 027	92 199	4.2	2 082 828	95.8
Age	25-34	1 141 616	42 441	3.7	1 099 175	96.3
	35-54	2 127 408	69 330	3.3	2 058 078	96.7
	55-64	1 026 006	38 982	3.8	987 024	96.2
Educational attainment	Basic education or below	1 039 266	39 656	3.8	999 610	96.2
	Upper secondary education	2 284 298	52 352	2.3	2 231 947	97.7
	Tertiary education	971 466	58 745	6.0	912 721	94.0
Labour status	Employed	2 929 552	102 288	3.5	2 827 264	96.5
	Unemployed	604 843	25 735	4.3	579 108	95.7
	Inactive	760 635	22 729	3.0	737 906	97.0
Residence	Urban	3 172 067	115 304	3.6	3 056 764	96.4
	Rural	1 122 962	35 448	3.2	1 087 514	96.8

Table 23: Population according to number of books at home, by gender, age, education, labour status and residence, 2007

		Total	0-25 books		26-100 books		More than 100 books	
		Number	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Sex	Total	4 295 030	1 409 048	32.8	1 395 833	32.5	1 490 148	34.7
	Male	2 120 002	744 861	35.1	696 330	32.8	678 811	32.0
	Female	2 175 027	664 187	30.5	699 503	32.2	811 337	37.3
Age	25-34	1 141 616	432 798	37.9	352 671	30.9	356 147	31.2
	35-54	2 127 408	657 543	30.9	705 811	33.2	764 055	35.9
	55-64	1 026 006	318 708	31.1	337 351	32.9	369 946	36.1
Educational attainment	Basic education or below	1 039 266	818 665	78.8	183 763	17.7	36 838	3.5
	Upper secondary education	2 284 298	547 717	24.0	988 092	43.3	748 489	32.8
	Tertiary education	971 466	42 667	4.4	223 978	23.1	704 822	72.6
Labour status	Employed	2 929 552	749 483	25.6	1 010 196	34.5	1 169 873	39.9
	Unemployed	604 843	365 712	60.5	145 454	24.0	93 677	15.5
	Inactive	760 635	293 853	38.6	240 183	31.6	226 599	29.8
Residence	Urban	3 172 067	774 433	24.4	1 080 659	34.1	1 316 975	41.5
	Rural	1 122 962	634 615	56.5	315 174	28.1	173 173	15.4

Table 24: Population reading newspapers, by gender, age, education, labour status and residence, 2007

		Total	Every day or almost every day		At least once a week (but not every day)		At least once a month (but not every week)		Less than once a month		Don't read newspapers	
		Number	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Sex	Total	4 295 030	1 921 639	44.7	1 558 266	36.3	217 646	5.1	124 835	2.9	472 644	11.0
	Male	2 120 002	1 056 527	49.8	714 495	33.7	98 126	4.6	54 805	2.6	196 048	9.2
	Female	2 175 027	865 111	39.8	843 771	38.8	119 519	5.5	70 029	3.2	276 596	12.7

Age	25-34	1 141 616	484 887	42.5	413 347	36.2	60 569	5.3	34 599	3.0	148 213	13.0
	35-54	2 127 408	989 655	46.5	744 911	35.0	104 723	4.9	61 608	2.9	226 511	10.6
	55-64	1 026 006	447 096	43.6	400 008	39.0	52 354	5.1	28 628	2.8	97 920	9.5
Educational attainment	Basic education or below	1 039 266	138 428	13.3	373 982	36.0	108 204	10.4	67 548	6.5	351 103	33.8
	Upper secondary education	2 284 298	152 379	50.4	904 101	39.6	90 227	3.9	44 996	2.0	92 596	4.1
	Tertiary education	971 466	630 832	64.9	280 183	28.8	19 215	2.0	12 291	1.3	28 946	3.0
Labour status	Employed	2 929 552	206 053	53.0	1 011 943	34.5	119 624	4.1	70 065	2.4	175 629	6.0
	Unemployed	604 843	118 366	19.6	230 491	38.1	50 584	8.4	25 500	4.2	179 901	29.7
	Inactive	760 635	250 982	33.0	315 832	41.5	47 437	6.2	29 270	3.8	117 115	15.4
Residence	Urban	3 172 067	201 180	48.7	1 132 791	35.7	140 636	4.4	74 051	2.3	279 279	8.8
	Rural	1 122 962	63 240	33.5	425 475	37.9	77 010	6.9	50 783	4.5	193 366	17.2

Table 25: Population participating in activities of amateur collectives, associations, clubs of interest, aged 25-64 by gender, age, education, labour status and residence, 2007

		Total	Participated in the last 12 months		Not participated in the last 12 months	
		Number	Number	%	Number	%
Sex	Total	4 295 030	264 420	6.2	4 030 610	93.8
	Male	2 120 002	132 895	6.3	1 987 107	93.7
	Female	2 175 027	131 525	6.0	2 043 503	94.0
Age	25-34	1 141 616	84 712	7.4	1 056 903	92.6
	35-54	2 127 408	119 332	5.6	2 008 076	94.4
	55-64	1 026 006	60 375	5.9	965 631	94.1
Educational attainment	Basic education or below	1 039 266	22 164	2.1	1 017 101	97.9
	Upper secondary education	2 284 298	127 727	5.6	2 156 571	94.4
	Tertiary education	971 466	114 528	11.8	856 938	88.2
Labour status	Employed	2 929 552	206 053	7.0	2 723 499	93.0
	Unemployed	604 843	16 317	2.7	588 526	97.3
	Inactive	760 635	42 049	5.5	718 586	94.5
Residence	Urban	3 172 067	201 180	6.3	2 970 888	93.7
	Rural	1 122 962	63 240	5.6	1 059 722	94.4

Source: National Statistical Institute, 2009 <http://www.nsi.bg/>

Table 26: Number of theatres, seats and shows, 1998 - 2009

Field / Year	1998	1999	2000	2002	2003	2005	2007	2008	2009
Number of theatres	80	81	75	n.a.	n.a.	75	78	78	80
Seats	29 904	30 500	30 277	n.a.	n.a.	30 105	29 977	28 386	29 904
Shows	11 038	12 500	10 465	n.a.	n.a.	10 776	10 951	10 880	11 038
Visits to theatres	1 611 000	1 600 000	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1 475 323	1 636 000	1 679 000	1 611 000

Table 27: Number of cinemas, screenings, visits and ticket sales, 1998-2009

Field / Year	1998	1999	2000	2003	2006	2007	2008	2009
Number of cinemas	205	191	179	149	66	62	57	56

- in towns	183	168	158	130	59	54	50	54
- in villages	22	23	21	19	7	8	7	2
Number of screenings	100 074	84 314	103 876	136 422	157 247	140 182	159 765	173 140
- in towns	99 633	84 080	103 488	136 145	157 154	139 971	159 544	172 120
- in villages	441	234	388	277	93	211	221	1020
Visits	3 204 000	1 923 000	1 860 484	3 530 595	2 580 000	2 631 000	2 429 000	3 041 000
- in towns	3 189 000	1 909 000	n.a.	3 508 000	2 578 000	2 627 000	2 427 000	3 029 000
- in villages	15 000	14 000	n.a.	2 595	2 000	4 000	2 000	12 000
Ticket sales (million BGL)	10 730.0	8 000	7 327	13 680	9 312	n.a.	13 454	22 852

Table 28: Number of libraries and Chitalishte, 1998-2009

Field / Year	1998	1999	2000	2002	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Number of libraries	7 483	7 283	7 091	49**	50**	4 552***	48**	49**	47***	47***
- Library stock ('000 items)	97 536	96 701	95 737	34 677	35 143	36 582	34 966	35 422	34 987	35 040
- Books	78 571	77 756	76 615	18 644	18 902	68 531	18 562	18 856	18 411	18 395
Average loans per reader	19	19	18	26	24	n.a.	26	27.8	27.04	28.86
- books	16	16	16	19	17	18	18.5	19.6	19.24	20.50
Number of Chitalishte	3 125	3 056	2 933	3 000	n.a.	2 838	n.a.	2 895	n.a.	n.a.
- in towns	514	510	508	n.a.	n.a.	539	n.a.	548	n.a.	n.a.
- in villages	2 611	2 546	2 485	n.a.	n.a.	2 299	n.a.	2 347	n.a.	n.a.
Members (in '000)	191 000	180 000	171 000	n.a.	n.a.	164 000	n.a.	168 000	n.a.	n.a.
- in towns	86 000	81 000	79 000	n.a.	n.a.	68 000	n.a.	67 000	n.a.	n.a.
- in villages	105 000	99 000	92 000	n.a.	n.a.	96 000	n.a.	101 000	n.a.	n.a.

Table 29: Visitors to museums and galleries, 1998-2009

Field / Year	1998	1999	2000	2002	2005	2007	2008	2009
Visitors (in '000)	5 646	5 053	3 938	3 554.5	3 925.2	4 060	4 631	4 371
- of which to art galleries	1 685	1 503	880	590.6	395.6	458	408	n.a.

Table 30: Film production, television and radio stations, 1998-2009

Film production							
	1998	2000	2003	2006	2007	2008	2009
Number of film produced	32	79	86	125	70	91	110
Of which for television	15	62	76	106	59	72	94
Full-length films	6	13	12	23	19	14	14
Short- and medium-length films	26	66	74	102	51	77	72
Television stations							
Numbers	31	86	98	102	110	119	113
Programmes-hours	206 698	395 369	498 091	599 135	661 872	747 036	694 778
Radio stations							
Numbers	33	67	89	95	107	114	104
Programmes-hours	354 664	493 376	525 511	591 834	843 365	797 683	726 776

Source: Statistical Reference book 1999, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009; National Statistical Institute, Bulgaria 2009.

* Culture clubs.

** From 2002 to 2004 and in 2006, the NSI covered libraries only stocking more than 200 000 items.

*** Libraries stocking more than 2 000 items.

Note: From 2002, the NSI will update data on theatres, cinemas and *chitalishte* on a five-year basis.

Table 31 and 32 provide data on rates of participation in those areas of cultural life that do not receive notable public subsidies, mainly the fields of book publishing and other printed media.

Table 31: Published books and brochures, 1998-2009

Year	Titles - Number	Circulation - thousands	Average circulation per book - thousands	Books and brochures per person - numbers
1998	4 863	11 873.9	2.4	1.4
2000	5 027	9 363.2	1.9	1.2
2001	4 984	6 567.1	1.3	0.8
2002	6 018	5 616.2	0.9	0.7
2003	5 511	4 483.5	0.8	0.6
2004	6 432	4 286.1	0.7	0.6
2005	6 029	3 917.1	0.6	0.5
2006	6 562	4 137.6	0.6	0.5
2007	6 648	4 797.0	0.7	0.6
2008	6 767	4 646.0	0.7	0.6
2009	5 737	5 971.0	0.9	1.1

Source: National Statistical Institute, "Bulgaria 2005", Sofia, 2009, <http://www.nsi.bg/>

Table 32: Published newspapers, magazines and bulletins, 1998-2009

Year	Newspapers			Magazines and bulletins		
	Titles - copies	Yearly printing		Titles - copies	Yearly printing	
		Thousand copies	Per capita - copies		Thousand copies	Per capita - copies
1998	644	428 430.3	51.9	639	14 121.3	1.7
2000	545	442 570.5	54.2	647	19 149.6	2.3
2001	465	375 244.2	47.2	678	16 999.4	2.1
2002	401	358 423.6	45.5	673	15 184.0	1.9
2003	386	297 687.7	38.1	661	17 034.3	2.2
2004	420	310 500.0	n.a.	770	19 500.0	n.a.
2005	386	297 687.7	n.a.	746	13 665.2	n.a.
2006	446	325 733.1	42.3	778	13 665.2	n.a.
2007	448	338 590.0	44.2	817	17 944.0	n.a.
2008	438	370 789.0	48.6	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
2009	436	355 600.0	46.9	745	11 401.0	n.a.

Source: <http://www.nsi.bg/>

6.3. Trends and figures in household expenditure

Table 5: Household cultural expenditure by expenditure purpose, 2011 and 2015

Items (Field/Domain)	Household expenditure (in million EUR and percentages)				Average per capita expenditure (EUR)	
	2011	%	2015	%	2011	2015
I. Books and Press	47,6	11,97	55,2	10,29	6,5	7,54
Books	18,4	4,63	32,2	4,32	2,52	4,40
Press	29,1	7,34	23	3,09	3,98	3,14
II. Cultural Services	9,2	2,3	19,9	2,68	1,2	2,71
Cinema, theatre and others	9,2	2,3	18,4	2,47	1,2	2,51
Museums, libraries, parks and similar	-	-	1,5	0,21	-	0,2
Photographic services and other	-	-	-	-	-	-
III. Audiovisual equipment and accessories	12,1	2,9	46	6,46	1,6	6,27
Support for recording image, sound and data	3	0,7	3	0,7	0,4	0,4
Audiovisual equipment and accessories	6,1	1,5	43	5,76	0,8	5,87
Musical instruments	3	0,7	-	-	0,4	-
IV. Subscriptions of television, information processing	159,8	40,16	142,8	19,14	21,61	19,4
Rental and subscriptions of radio and television	147,5	37,07	119,8	16,05	20,01	16,3
<i>Subscriptions of radio and television</i>						
<i>Rental of cultural equipment and accessories</i>						
Information Processing and Internet						
<i>Material for information processing</i>	12,3	3,09	23	3,09	1,6	3,1
<i>Mobile devices</i>						
<i>Mobile and Internet services</i>						
TOTAL	25,2	100	33,2			

6.4. Culture and civil society

Cultural inclusion in the country is fragmented, with the capital and major cities offering more opportunities for participation to its citizens compared to smaller cities and villages.

Chitalishte is one of the most widespread forms of socio-cultural centres in the country. They provide various activities and opportunities for activity and recreation, including music and dance, clubs, sports and group activities.

By the end of 2017, there were 3 321 socio-cultural centres registered in the country. In the same year, they organised 21 267 festive celebrations, 7 130 book presentations, 24 334 festivals, 3 762 gatherings, 1 001 museum gatherings, 4 245 cinema screenings and 12 531 other cultural and creative activities. They are also an appropriate space for teachers or instructors to pursue private activity and provide paid lessons.

The socio-cultural centres (chitalishta) can raise funds from membership fees, cultural and other activities, rents, donations, and more. However, the main source of funding is the state subsidy, which is provided through the respective municipal budget.

According to data from the National Statistics Institute, there were 47 libraries in the country in 2018 with a stock of more than 200 000 units (documents, books, periodicals, etc.). Most of them are in the southwestern region of the country, of which Sofia is also part. A total of 239 000 readers are registered for the year of 2018, which is 3.6% less than in 2017. However, visits have increased by 6.7% on an annual basis.

In big cities there are other forms of cultural centres. In Sofia, for example, in 2015, the project „читАлнЯта“ (The Reading Room) was launched, which is being implemented by the City Reading Association together with the municipal enterprise Tourism of the Sofia Municipality.

7. Financing and support

7.1. Public funding

7.1.1. INDICATORS

The figures in the table below are calculated on the basis of annual NSI data, on the size of the population based on births and deaths, and data from the last census conducted in March 2001. The basic reason for the rise of the cultural expenditure per capita is caused by the significant the rise of GDP - more than twice between 2002 and 2008. For 2009, the level of cultural expenditure per capita is on a level with 2007, mostly because of the decrease in the GDP and budget restrictions of public expenditure.

Indicator 1: Public cultural expenditure, all levels of government, per capita in 2009 was 57.14 BGN or 29.30 EUR.

Indicator 2: This corresponds to 0.64% of the GDP.

Indicator 3: The share of the total public expenditure in 2009 was 1.72%.

Table 9: Public cultural expenditure per capita in BGN and in EUR, 1999-2009

Year	Expenditure per capita in EUR	Expenditure per capita in BGN	Exchange rate of the BGN against the EUR	% of GDP	GDP per capita in BGN	% of total public expenditures
1999	14.55	22.33	1.95	0.8	n.a	3.77
2000	15.90	31.00	1.95	0.6	n.a	1.66
2001	18.76	36.58	1.95	0.7	n.a	1.62
2002	14.08	27.46	1.95	0.75	4 087	1.56
2003	14.68	28.63	1.95	0.66	4 367	1.77
2004	13.85	27.01	1.95	0.67	4 989	1.69
2005	17.66	34.44	1.95	0.74	5 529	1.72
2006	22.03	42.95	1.95	0.64	6 411	1.75
2007	29.38	57.29	1.95	0.70	7 379	1.73
2008	33.39	65.12	1.95	0.72	8 753	1.82
2009	29.30	57.14	1.95	0.64	9 061	1.72

Source: NSI, Bulgarian National Bank (<http://www.bnb.bg/>), 1999-2009

7.1.2. EXPENDITURE ON GOVERNMENT LEVEL

Table 6. Public cultural expenditure by level of government, 2018

Level of government	Total expenditure in national currency	Total expenditure in EUR*	% share of total
State (central, federal)	195 199 773	99 846 431	42%
Regional (provincial, Länder, etc.)	-	-	-
Local (municipal, incl. counties)	272 425 094	139 347 874	58%

TOTAL			100%
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Source: Ministry of Culture budget report for 2018, 2019

Note: * At the date of expenditure

7.1.3. EXPENDITURE PER SECTOR

Table 7: Direct state cultural expenditure and transfers (central level)*: by sector, [2018], in 1000 of national currency

Field / Domain / Sub-domain	TOTAL		of which: Direct expenditure** (of government or its agencies)	of which: Transfers **	
	in 1000 BGN	in %		to other levels of government	to NGOs, companies, individuals
I. Cultural Heritage					
<i>Historical Monuments</i>	7 554	2,45	7 554		
<i>Museums</i>	13 100	4,44	13 100		
<i>Archives</i>					
<i>Libraries</i>					
<i>Intangible Heritage / Folk Culture</i>					
II. Visual Arts					
<i>Fine Arts / Plastic Arts</i>					
<i>Photography</i>					
<i>Architecture***</i>					
<i>Design / Applied Arts</i>					
III. Performing Arts					
<i>Music</i>					
<i>Theatre, Music Theatre, Dance</i>	105 208	33,99	104 416		792
<i>Multidisciplinary</i>					
IV. Books and Press					
<i>Books</i>	6 002	1,94	6 002		
<i>Press</i>					
V. Audiovisual and Multimedia					
<i>Cinema</i>	12 817	4,14			12 817
<i>Television</i>	68 814	22,23	68 814		
<i>Sound recordings</i>					
<i>Radio</i>	45 451	14,68	45 451		
<i>Multimedia</i>					
VI. Interdisciplinary					
<i>Socio-culture</i>	2 066	0,66	362		1 704
<i>Cultural Relations Abroad</i>	5 680	1,93	5 680		
<i>Administration****</i>	4 082	1,31	4 082		
<i>Cultural Education****</i>	36 404	11,86	36 404		
VII. Not covered by domain I-VI	1 139	0,36	555		584

TOTAL	308 317	100	292 420		15 897
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Source: Ministry of Culture budget report for 2018, 2019

7.2. Support programmes

7.2.1. STRATEGIES, PROGRAMMES AND OTHER FORMS OF SUPPORT

Information is currently not available.

7.2.2. ARTIST'S FUNDS

The National Culture Fund (NCF) was established by the *Protection and Development of Culture Act* and began operating in November 2000. Its main goal is to support the development of culture in accordance with national cultural policies outlined in the state programmes for the corresponding period and spelled out in the *Protection and Development of Culture Act*.

The governing body of the NCF is a Management Board whose chairman is the Minister of Culture. Members of the Board are distinguished cultural figures, representatives of unions of artists and a representative from each of the municipalities, the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Finance.

Funding for creative projects is allocated on the basis of open tenders / competitions which are prepared and approved by the Management Board. Priority areas for support are formulated at the beginning of each year. All cultural organisations can participate in these competitions, including non-profit organisations and individuals. The applicants submit their documentation according to a specific application procedure. The applications are examined and evaluated by commissions of experts from different sectors. The Management Board discusses the decisions made by the commissions of experts and reaches a final decision for funding winning projects. The competition results are announced on the website of the Euro-Bulgarian Cultural Centre: <https://www.ngobg.info/en/organizations/630-eurobulgarian-cultural-centre.html>, and the winners are informed by personal letters.

The new priorities of NCF foresee its development as an independent organisation, which takes part in the formulation of Bulgarian cultural policy. In order to achieve this goal, the NCF has outlined the following activities which it plans to undertake:

- formation of an environment and preparation of a normative order for the creation of a national cultural strategy. This includes efforts to implement mechanisms and procedures outlined in the *Protection and Development of Culture Act*, aimed at widening its scope of activities and securing the economic and institutional structure of the Fund;
- participation of NCF in projects, informational and expert programmes of analysis of the Cultural Department;
- participation in the programmes of the European Union in order to ensure the financial support required to realise reforms in the area of culture; and
- elaborate mechanisms to attract additional resources from donations and from partnerships with other institutions.

In 2003, a programme for international cultural exchange and mobility was launched. Within this programme, the NCF distributes yearly around 43 000 BGN (22 000 EUR), dedicated to travel expenses of artists and managers on a competition basis.

Since 2003, the NCF attempts at increasing its resources and activities through new partnerships with different types of organisations. The NCF, together with the Soros Centre for Cultural Policies and the Swiss Cultural Programme in Bulgaria organised and held a joint competition to support new projects proposed by the young and youngest generation artists in the whole spectrum of contemporary arts, including training. The goal of the competition was to encourage the development of new trends in the field of contemporary art and culture, to stimulate the production of a variety of cultural products, and to contribute to their "popularisation" and international exchange. The Fund extended its activities over the next years and in achieved in 2007 the highest amount of funds raised for additional support activities, research and surveys, international collaboration and networking etc. Comparing to the year 2006, its total budget for activities doubled.

In 2009, the National Culture Fund budget was 1 228 491 BGN - from state subsidies, endowments etc. and was used for supporting different projects within NFC directions of priority as follows:

Table 14: State subsidy and endowments used for supporting different projects within NFC, 2009

Cultural Contacts Programme "Mobility"	183 118 BGN
"Critique Literature" Programme	91 240 BGN
"Scholarships" Programme	22 500 BGN
"Authentic Folklore" Programme	38 996 BGN
"Debuts" Programme	50 000 BGN
"Translations" Programme"	29 990 BGN
"Short-length films" Programme	54 037 BGN
Other	84 890 BGN
Donations for fixed purposes	572 800 BGN
Information and strategic initiatives of NFC	35 000 BGN
Total for projects	554 771 BGN
Administrative costs	100 920 BGN
TOTAL	1 228 491 BGN

Source: National Culture Fund, 2009.

The State Prize "Paisii Hilendarski" was established by *Article 19 of Protection and Development of Culture Act*. Since 2000, it has been awarded on a yearly basis to one eminent Bulgarian artist (author or performer) whose work is of importance, or related to Bulgarian history and tradition. The Prize is given by the Prime Minister based on proposals put forward by the Minister of Culture (who in turn receives proposals from all state authorities and non-government cultural organisations).

Since 2003, the Ministry of Culture awards the yearly prize "Golden Age" in honour of the 24th May - a Day of Bulgarian Education and Culture and Slavic writing. The Prize - honorary decoration and a sum of 3 000 BGN - is given by the Minister of Culture for contributions to the development and popularisation of Bulgarian culture. In 2003, the Prize was awarded to 30 Bulgarian artists from all areas of culture. They are nominated by the artists

unions and national art centres.

Indirect state support for artists and creativity is provided via various laws with provisions recognising the specificity of creative work: employment relations, social protection in case of unemployment, income tax, donations for cultural activities, social insurance, etc. Notably, all those laws are currently being revised for the purpose of harmonisation with the *acquis communautaire*.

7.2.3. GRANTS, AWARDS, SCHOLARSHIPS

The important positive role of NGOs in the transition period has become obvious in the past five years. Recent data shows that there has been an increase of third sector support for cultural projects.

Foundations offer three main forms of support to artists including:

- talent scouting and arranging exhibitions, shows, competitions and other forums for young hopefuls;
- creation and improvement of working and training conditions (facilities, workshops, courses etc.); and
- grants for education or special training abroad.

The Open Society Institute, Future for Bulgaria Foundation, Ss Cyril and Methodius Foundation, the 13 Centuries Bulgaria Fund, and since 2000, the National Culture Fund, together with the EU Phare Programme, granted a total of more than USD 13.6 million for cultural projects between 1996-2004.

The American Foundation in Bulgaria (established in 2004) supports and promotes excellence in Education, Natural Sciences, Arts, Culture, and the Humanities. Its "Arts" programme supports projects of young film makers and visual artists, as well as cultural heritage.

Table 15: NGO contributions to culture 1996-2005 (in USD)

Organisation	1996-1998	1999-2001	2002-2004	2005	Total
Open Society Total	4 850 322	3 073 708	1 867 773	-	9 791 803
- Culture	-	1 982 129	646 563	-	
- Media	-	666 111	305 000	-	
- Libraries	-	625 468	-	-	
- Women's Programme	-	-	224 000	-	
- Roma Programme	-	-	398 000	-	
Future for Bulgaria	427 530	-	-	-	427 530
Phare Programme	1 605 000	-	-	-	1 605 000
13 Centuries Bulgaria	49 636	-	-	-	49 636
National Culture Fund		236 695	1 457 311	-	1 694 006
Total	6 932 488	3 310 403	3 325 084	-	13 567 975
Swiss Cultural Programme in Bulgaria (Pro Helvetia)		100 000 CHF	300 000 CHF	530 000 CHF	930 000 CHF

Obviously, the major sponsor of culture 1996-2004 was the Open Society Foundation. At the same time the Foundation, through its Soros Centre for the Arts, developed specialised programmes (on visual arts, theatre, music, literature, cultural heritage), as well as a comprehensive database through which it provides consulting

services to Bulgarian and foreign artists and experts.

According to information provided by the non-governmental organisation "Bulgarian Donor's Forum" (established in 2003), various donors provided support for projects in the cultural area in the amount of 300 000 BGN for the year 2004. These include the Swiss Cultural Programme Pro Helvetia, the European Cultural Foundation, business companies (ING Bank, Post Bank) and charity business networks (Rotary Club). The majority of these grants were directed towards modern art, followed by support for the exploration and preservation of the cultural and historic heritage.

The number of companies that donate to charity is low, but is growing - from 4% in 2003 to 6% in 2005. A research on the "Bulgarian Donor's Forum" indicates that 60% of the donations are from international institutions and foundations from USA, Germany, Japan, European Union and about 20% from Bulgarian private companies. Bulgaria receives about 20 million EUR from foreign donor's capital annually. More recently, there is a noticed reduction of international involvement and an increase in funding coming from the Bulgarian state budget.

The ratio of state subsidies delivered through the state budget (741 326 254 USD) to funds provided by the third sector (13 567 975 USD) for support to cultural projects between 1996 and 2004 is approximately 50:1, i.e. 2% of all funds invested in cultural projects have been granted by NGOs. This ratio is common to most European countries with well developed legislation, established traditions, and a strong business community, where the volume of funds obtained through sponsorship is between 1 and 6%.

In 2007 a culture support programme was launched by the Sofia City Hall. At its first session in the second half of 2007 it awarded 20 projects in 4 categories with an amount of 460 943 BGN (235 680 EUR).

7.2.4. SUPPORT TO PROFESSIONAL ARTISTS' ASSOCIATIONS OR UNIONS

Professional associations are currently lobbying the Parliament for favourable social and labour legislation for their respective professions, as well as for passage of specific legislation facilitating the emergence of a market for works of art.

Artists association maintain social funds offering members lump-sum aid or monthly supplements to recipients of pensions below the poverty threshold. Members of professional associations are entitled to discounts on goods and services from association-owned shops, enterprises or recreation facilities.

Some associations negotiate threshold rates of payment for certain professions with potential employers. Only a few associations have a special fund for creative support which pays part of the cost of creative activity and handles marketing.

7.3. Private funding

In the Republic of Bulgaria there is a lack of systematic information on private financing of culture and cultural activities.

Expert Authors

Diana Andreeva



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Diana Andreeva is the co-founder and director of the Observatory of Cultural Economics. Her professional experience started in the field of finance in 1999 as a financial and marketing manager. Since 2005, she has been working as a researcher in cultural policy and cultural economics for the Public Expertise for Academic Change Project, Sofia University "KI.Ohridski". In 2006, she started working in The Red House Centre for Culture and Debate as a Programme manager. Since 2009, she is a guest lecturer of "Marketing and advertisement of Performing Arts" and "Financing of performing Arts" in National Academy of Film Theatre Arts "K. Sarafov". In 2011, she became a guest lecturer of "Economics and Financing of Film Industry" at the New Bulgarian University. In the past years she has been the author of many articles and studies and also participated in various Bulgarian and international research in the field of cultural economics and financing. She participated as a volunteer at different international organisations in 17 cultural projects in more than 10 countries.

[More information »](#)

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Tomova has a Master's degree in Economics and Economic Sociology and she has a doctoral degree ("Special features of arts markets (performing arts)") from the University of National and World Economics, Sofia. She was a fellow on cultural policies at the Centre for Policy Studies affiliated with the Central European University and the Open Society Institute, Budapest. She wrote articles, studies and monographs about cultural economics, cultural policy and advocacy, alternative financing of the public sector, market failures and possibilities of sustainable development in area of the cultural industries. She also participated in many Bulgarian and international research projects.

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The Bulgarian profile was first prepared by a research team from the Institute of Culturology, headed by Rayna Cherneva. Updated from 2002-2009 by team member Rossitsa Arkova, chief expert at the Analyses Department, and Tsveta Andreeva, expert at the International Cultural Policy Department, Ministry of Culture. Since 2010, the profile was updated by Bilyana Tomova and Diana Andreeva.