

Country Profile

Hungary

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This profile was updated by Péter Inkei, drawing from the previous version of 2016, completed jointly with Veronka Vaspál. It is based on official and non-official sources addressing current cultural policy issues.

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1. Cultural policy system	4
1.1. Objectives, main features and background	4
1.2. Domestic governance system	5
1.2.1. Organisational organigram	5
1.2.2. National authorities	5
1.2.3. Regional authorities	7
1.2.4. Local authorities	7
1.2.5. Main non-governmental actors	7
1.2.6. Transversal co-operation	7
1.3. Cultural institutions	8
1.3.1. Overview of cultural institutions	8
1.3.2. Data on selected public and private cultural institutions	8
1.3.3. Public cultural institutions: trends and strategies	8
1.4. International cooperation	9
1.4.1. Public actors and cultural diplomacy	9
1.4.2. European / international actors and programmes	10
1.4.3. NGO's and direct professional cooperation	11
2. Current cultural affairs	12
2.1. Key developments	12
2.2. Cultural rights and ethics	12
2.3. Role of artists and cultural professionals	13
2.4. Digital policy and developments	13
2.5. Cultural and social diversity	14
2.5.1. National / international intercultural dialogue	14
2.5.2. Diversity education	15
2.5.3. Media pluralism and content diversity	15
2.5.4. Language	16
2.5.5. Gender	17
2.5.6. Disability	17
2.6. Culture and social inclusion	17
2.7. Societal impact of arts	19
2.8. Cultural sustainability	19
2.9. Other main cultural policy issues	19
3. Cultural and creative sectors	20
3.1. Heritage	20
3.2. Archives and libraries	21
3.3. Performing arts	22
3.4. Visual arts and crafts	22
3.5. Cultural arts and creative industries	22
3.5.1. General developments	22
3.5.2. Books and press	23
3.5.3. Audiovisual and interactive media	23
3.5.4. Music	23
3.5.5. Design and creative services	24
3.5.6. Cultural and creative tourism	24
4. Law and legislation	26
4.1. General legislation	26
4.1.1. Constitution	26
4.1.2. Allocation of public funds	27
4.1.3. Social security frameworks	27
4.1.4. Tax laws	28
4.1.5. Labour laws	30
4.1.6. Copyright provisions	30
4.1.7. Data protection laws	31
4.1.8. Language laws	31
4.1.9. Other areas of general legislation	32
4.2. Legislation on culture	32

4.2.1. General legislation on culture	32
4.2.2. Legislation on culture and natural heritage	33
4.2.3. Legislation on performance and celebration	34
4.2.4. Legislation on visual arts and crafts	34
4.2.5. Legislation on books and press	34
4.2.6. Legislation on audiovisual and interactive media	34
4.2.7. Legislation on design and creative services	35
5. Arts and cultural education	36
5.1. Policy and institutional overview	36
5.2. Arts in schools	36
5.3. Higher arts and cultural education	37
5.4. Out-of-school arts and cultural education	37
5.5. Vocational and professional training	37
6. Cultural participation and consumption	38
6.1. Policies and programmes	38
6.2. Trends and figures in cultural participation	38
6.3. Trends and figures in household expenditure	39
6.4. Culture and civil society	40
7. Financing and support	41
7.1. Public funding	41
7.1.1. Indicators	41
7.1.2. Expenditure on government level	41
7.1.3. Expenditure per sector	42
7.2. Support programmes	43
7.2.1. Strategies, programmes and other forms of support	43
7.2.2. Artist's funds	43
7.2.3. Grants, awards, scholarships	43
7.2.4. Support to professional artists' associations or unions	45
7.3. Private funding	45
Expert Authors	45

1. Cultural policy system

1.1. Objectives, main features and background

Objectives:

After 2010, when *Fidesz*, the governing party gained constitutional power at the elections, the previous focus on European integration and values moved towards national traditions and conservatism. This included, among others, increased attention on the culture of the approximately two million ethnic Hungarians in neighbouring countries. However, the objectives of cultural policy have not been enacted in official policy declarations. The statements of the Prime Minister suggest the main clues to the subsequent priorities in the cultural arena.



Until recently, culture did not figure among the top priorities in the evolution of the System of National Cooperation (*Nemzeti Együttműködés Rendszere – NER*), as the current political power self-identifies. A new era began in 2019, when the Prime Minister announced a focus on the cultural transformation of the country, in the political sense of the term. From the ideological stance the emphasis shifted towards competitiveness: the programmes and institutions connected to the ruling power are expected to achieve and exhibit excellence.

Main features:

The system does not operate along the conventional algorithm of defining cultural policy priorities, preparing and executing implementation; a politicised culture without policies. Participatory planning and negotiated decision-making are almost entirely absent. The state Secretariat for Culture in the Ministry for Human Resources or the Committee for Culture of the Parliament have negligible roles, and the same applies to the main bodies of the system: the Hungarian Arts Academy – *Magyar Művészeti Akadémia, MMA*, or the National Council for Culture. Fundamental changes occur overnight and are often linked to influential personalities.

Continued centralisation is an important feature of the system. Mandates and resources of local governments are limited and social and professional partners are seldom consulted. Annual budgets reveal little of the next priorities as their provisions are significantly overwritten by ad hoc government decisions during the year. The lack of detailed clear strategies does not mean financial neglect: on the contrary, the public cultural spending of the government is among the highest in the continent. In particular, a significant amount is spent on preservation and reconstruction of built cultural heritage and new buildings. An eminent example of the latter is the Eiffel Forum: a vast complex of locomotive repair shops turned into high quality concert halls, rehearsal rooms, warehouses, and workshops of the State Opera, inaugurated in September 2021.

Latest developments:

Hand in hand with the accelerated reorganisation of the institutional structures of higher education, research and media, the past few years have seen a basic overhaul of the cultural arena. An iconic step was the establishment of the Foundation for Hungarian Culture (*Magyar Kultúráért Alapítvány*) in April 2021, a “Public Interest Foundation Performing Public Functions”, as a new kind of institution introduced by the Parliament on the same day. Sizeable assets and competences as well as huge current and prospected financial resources and properties have been donated to the new Foundation.

Background:

1918- 1945: Hungary was a relatively small East-Central European country, whose cultural performance reflected the legacies of a once momentous middle power of a thousand-year-old kingdom, and had the features of a semi-feudal societal arrangement.

1945-1956: Up until the revolution of 1956, a crude, schematic political course prevailed, slavishly imitating the Soviets, oppressing every kind of autonomy in cultural life, applying nevertheless important measures in the democratisation of culture.

1960-1989: Cultural dogmatism began to melt away in the early 1960s. Up until 1989, in culture, like in other areas of life, a protracted process of revision was in progress and the most gradual transition within the entire communist bloc had taken place. As a result of state subsidies, culture was accessible at low cost, and cultural consumption (reading of books, attendance at the theatre, cinema, concerts, libraries, museums, and exhibitions) was growing. Under dictatorship, art acquired a specific political significance, which contributes to the view of many that culture has been one of the losers in the transition.

1990-2010: Transition from communism took place amidst great economic difficulties. The national objective of European integration defined the priorities and modalities of cultural policies. Nevertheless, a fatigue from the decades of reforms and expectations led to increasing economic and social crisis in Hungary – aggravated, but not really caused, by the 1998 world crisis. Those years did not favour concerted action for culture.

Since 2010: The System of National Cooperation (*Nemzeti Együttműködés Rendszere – NER*) has prevailed.

1.2. Domestic governance system

1.2.1. ORGANISATIONAL ORGANIGRAM

Within the circumstances of the atypical distribution of cultural policy competences in the country, described in the next section, it would be misleading to present the organigram of the State Secretariat for Culture in the Ministry for Human Resources, with or without the presentation of the structural features of the other institutions with competences in cultural policy decisions and implementation.

1.2.2. NATIONAL AUTHORITIES

The single-chamber Parliament produces legislation. In addition to its role in preparing laws, the Committee for

Culture and Press also fulfills supervisory functions by occasionally putting various issues related to culture on its agenda. Overall, however, since spring 2010 when *Fidesz* gained 2/3 of the parliamentary seats – a feat that was repeated in 2014 and 2018 – in the *NER* era, the Parliament and its Committees have limited autonomy, and reflect the will of the government or the dominant party.

Since 2010 there has not been a separate ministry for culture. Administering issues of culture is dispersed between various governmental organs.

Among the nine state secretaries in the composite Ministry of Human Resources, one is responsible for culture; among the fourteen deputy state secretaries one overlooks issues of culture, and another is in charge of development and financing in culture. In the same Ministry, there are—as of 2021—thirteen ministerial commissioners, whose respective remits include the regeneration of the Budapest City Park, the reconstruction of the Hungarian State Opera House, the integrated development of the national library and literary collections, the upgrading of circus arts, the coordination of basic cultural services, music education, as well as the integrated development of national museums.

The respective ministries appear as chapters of the united government web portal. Apart from news, the top official's introduction and a contact list of subordinate institutions, the site does not contain further information about policies, plans and statistics. Decisions and new pieces of legislation are presented as news items but are not stored in a structured fashion. A separate service portal displays official communication and management issues.

Built heritage and archaeology – their development, protection, and regulation – are the remit of a Deputy State Secretary who reports to the Minister of the Prime Minister's Office. His work is helped by a Ministerial Commissioner who coordinates cultural heritage tasks. Another Ministerial Commissioner administers the national castle programme.

In the Ministry for Innovation and Technology a Ministerial Commissioner oversees the creative industries.

After intermediate changes during the past decade, cultural institutions abroad are now supervised by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade.

A Government Commissioner administers the film sector (“in charge of the development of the national audio-visual industry”), and another coordinated the preparations for the European Capital of Culture in 2013 in Veszprém.

Government and ministerial commissioners have staffs of various sizes and fulfill functions of public administration.

The constitution and various laws also prescribe the involvement of the Hungarian Arts Academy – *MMA* into all major cultural policy decisions.

The National Cultural Fund is a semi-autonomous institution and remains in charge of financing projects.

1.2.3. REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

The elected assemblies and self-governments of the 19 counties ("*megye*") have no mandate on culture.

1.2.4. LOCAL AUTHORITIES

There are 3 178 local governments with mayors and elected bodies in Hungary. The list of their obligatory tasks includes cultural services, especially securing access to public library services, the support of art organisations and community cultural activities, as well as the protection of local cultural heritage. The content of these tasks is not well defined and on account of the centralising policies of the current government, the relevant competences and resources of local governments have been reduced. Libraries, museums, theatres were transferred to the towns with county rank.

1.2.5. MAIN NON-GOVERNMENTAL ACTORS

The current constitution (The Fundamental Law of Hungary), which entered effect in 2012, positions the Hungarian Arts Academy (*Magyar Művészeti Akadémia – MMA*) at the same level as the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. This latter was founded in 1827 while *MMA* was upgraded to the rank of a public foundation by Act CIX in 2011, from a non-governmental association which had been in existence since 1992.

Main professional bodies:

- Hungarian Music Council / *Magyar Zenei Tanács*
- Association of Hungarian Filmmakers / *Magyar Filmművészek Szövetsége*
- Association of Hungarian Librarians / *Magyar Könyvtárosok Egyesülete*
- Association of Hungarian Fine and Applied Artists / *Magyar Képzőművészek és Iparművészek Szövetsége*
- Association of Hungarian Dancers / *Magyar Táncművészek Szövetsége*
- Hungarian Publishers and Booksellers Association / *Magyar Könyvkiadók és Könyvterjesztők Egyesülése*
- Association of Hungarian Orchestras Magyar / *Szimfonikus Zenekarok Szövetsége*
- Hungarian Festival Association / *Magyar Fesztivál Szövetség*

In two important fields the political dividedness of the country led to the existence of two national representative entities:

- Hungarian Theatre Association / *Magyar Színházi Társaság*vs Hungarian Theatre Society / *Magyar Teátrumi Társaság*
- Hungarian Writers association / *Magyar Írószövetség*vs Society of Hungarian Authors / *Szépírók Társasága*

1.2.6. TRANSVERSAL CO-OPERATION

In a conventional setup, transversal co-operation implies the collaboration of the cultural ministry with other governmental bodies. In the current framework of horizontally distributed competences a considerable part of the co-operation occurs between the high offices in charge of a cultural policy segment and the other departments of the same ministry. This applies particularly to the state secretariat for culture which is bound to maintain daily working relations with the state secretariats for education or social matters within the same Ministry for Human Resources. In the absence of structured communication about the operations of these high

offices the details of the co-operation are not transparent.

1.3. Cultural institutions

1.3.1. OVERVIEW OF CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

As a legacy of the communist period, the state is expected and indeed is performing as the main sponsor of cultural institutions. That applies also to those connected to local governments, including the vast network of houses of culture (*művelődési houses*). With the regime change, opportunities for private investments and initiatives opened up and they led to a fundamental overhaul of the cultural industries, such as publishing, design, art galleries etc. – festivals can also be added to this list.

Independent art groups have a decisive role in challenging the primacy of large public ensembles, particularly in drama and dance, since the late communist era. In the rock music scene, spontaneous bottom-up emergence and independent operation are the rule.

The changes in the last few years have been so substantial that the focus of genuine overviews should very much be on these latest developments (see chapter 1.3.3).

1.3.2. DATA ON SELECTED PUBLIC AND PRIVATE CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

Table 1: Cultural institutions financed by public authorities, by domain

Domain	Cultural institutions (subdomains)	Number (Year)	Trend (++ to --)
Cultural heritage	Cultural heritage sites (World Heritage List)	8 (2021)	0
	Museums (organisations)	700 (2019)	0
	Archives (of public authorities)	88 (2019)	0
Visual arts	Public art galleries / exhibition halls	1 167 (2021)*	+
	Art academies (or universities)	5 (2019)	0
Performing arts	Symphonic orchestras	16 (2019)	+
	Music schools	737 (2009)**	+
	Music / theatre academies (or universities)	5 (2019)	0
	Dramatic theatre	220 (2019)	+
	Music theatres, opera houses	3 opera, 1 operetta and 1 music house (2021)	0
	Dance and ballet companies	42 (2019)	+
Books and Libraries	Libraries (including school libraries)	6802 (2019)	-
Audiovisual	Broadcasting organisations	..	
Interdisciplinary	Socio-cultural centres / cultural houses	5974 (2019)	0

Sources: <http://www.ksh.hu> except *: <http://www.artportal.hu>, **: <https://mzmsz.hu>

1.3.3. PUBLIC CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS: TRENDS AND STRATEGIES

The years after the 2018 parliamentary elections that produced a 2/3 majority for the third consecutive time for

Fidesz, and particularly after the 2019 local government elections with important gains by the opposition, are characterised by major changes in the structure of the public cultural institutions.

The short *Act CXXIV of 2019* postulates the concept of ‘institutions of cultural strategy’, offering a list of 17 organisations that range from the National Theatre to the Film Institute. Besides 11 budgetary institutions, these include 4 nonprofit limited companies and 2 nonprofit shareholding companies (these two are the above mentioned first and last items on the list). Next to 16 customary cultural institutions, the newly founded Institute for Hungarian Studies (*Magyarságkutató Intézet*, in fact a research centre) belongs to the group of 17. They will be financed by the national budget based on five-year agreements with the government. The same Act established the National Cultural Council chaired by a minister and comprising the heads of the cultural strategy institutions plus the chairman of the Hungarian Arts Academy – *MMA*.

In July 2021 a government decision (1501/2021) raised the current annual subsidies of the ‘institutions of cultural strategy’ by about 10% and instructs the competent ministries to earmark about one billion euro of additional resources for the same purpose in the next five years.

1.4. International cooperation

1.4.1. PUBLIC ACTORS AND CULTURAL DIPLOMACY

In 2021, 26 Hungarian Institutes operate in 24 countries. Until 2016 they were outposts of the Balassi Institute (*Balassi Intézet*, named after a 16th century poet); since the closure of this public institution the Hungarian Institutes are managed directly by the Foreign Ministry. Without any consultation or prior news, the members of the network were re-baptised as Liszt Institute (after the composer) overnight in September 2021. The oldest one was established in Vienna in 1924, while the latest additions were Ljubljana in 2016, and Tokyo and Seoul in 2019. The common web portal of the network is <https://culture.hu>. *It reflects the customary performance of foreign cultural institutes, which is primarily the display of national culture.* Bearing the title of *Collegium Hungaricum*, the Institutes in Berlin, Rome, and Vienna also provide scholars with fellowships and residencies.

Bilateral cultural agreements, usually in conjunction with educational and scientific co-operation are managed by the cultural state secretariat of the Ministry of Human Resources. The exchange of experts is still of some importance in the agreements, especially in the heritage field. In the arts, most co-operation projects are realised through other channels.

The earlier habit of running large scale “cultural seasons” in foreign countries has discontinued, mainly due to the Covid pandemic. Smaller Hungarian Days or Weeks are mainly held in the neighbouring countries with a sizeable Hungarian minority population (in 2021 in Bratislava and Cluj).

Before the pandemic, spectacular exhibitions organised by the Museum of Fine Arts and the National Gallery attracted masses of domestic and international visitors. These events required great efforts of international cultural co-operation. An exhibition of Gerhard Richter’s works was the latest in 2021, preceded by pre-Raphaelite masterpieces from the Tate Collection, Surrealism from Dali to Magritte (2019), and Bacon, Freud, and the London School (2018).

The International Department of the National Film Institute represents Hungarian films abroad and handles

their festival and sales activity. The government fosters the shooting of films in Hungary – several studios receive large multinational productions regularly, which is a solid segment of the international cultural cooperation of the country.

The Petőfi Literary Fund offers grants to foreign publishers for the translation and the production of Hungarian authors abroad. It also runs the Hungarian Translators House for residencies.

The Ludwig Museum curates the country's exhibits at the Venice Biennale, where Hungary has had a pavilion of its own since as early as 1909. Hungarian galleries have enjoyed a limited presence at the leading world events which is improving slowly.

Attracting major sporting events is a top priority for the government, absorbing large amounts of public subsidy and related investments. These are sometimes accompanied by impressive cultural performances like the opening celebrations of the 2017 World Aquatics Championships in Budapest.

1.4.2. EUROPEAN / INTERNATIONAL ACTORS AND PROGRAMMES

Hungary has been a member of UNESCO since 1948; its General Conference was presided by Hungarian women in 1974 and 2011. A staff of three operates the Secretariat of the Hungarian National Commission for UNESCO within the Ministry of Human Resources. In the cultural domain, among others, eight Hungarian sites were added to the World Heritage List between 1987 and 2002 (two of them are transborder sites). An international project on The Danube Limes, the line of the frontiers of the Roman Empire, was adopted as World Heritage in 2021 but the Hungarian government withdrew its involvement at the last minute.

Hungary ratified the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2006 and the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions in 2008. The body responsible for the implementation of the Convention in Hungary is the Hungarian Open-Air Museum in Szentendre; a national inventory was also set up. Currently, four items are inscribed on the UNESCO world list of Intangible Cultural Heritage, two of them with other countries. The national inventory of intangible cultural heritage contains 44 items.

Hungary is also party to the Memory of the World Register. In 2015, the 7th Hungarian item was added to the Memory of the World Register.

The European Folklore Institute is a regional centre for the safeguarding, revitalisation and diffusion of traditional culture and folklore in Europe: it was founded in 1996 by the Hungarian government and UNESCO.

The Structural Funds of the European Union finance a considerable number of cultural heritage projects, with the largest amounts going to built heritage restoration and upgrading.

Hungarian operations have been active in applying for European cultural grants since Culture 2000. In the latest seven-year period they coordinated 12 Creative Europe projects and participated in about 70 more. Winners can get matching funding from the National Cultural Fund (NKA) to cover part or all of their own contribution.

Hungary also takes part in the cultural co-operation programme of the Visegrad Fund, as well as of the Central European Initiative and the EU strategy for the Danube Region.

Following 2010 Pécs, in 2023 Veszprém will be European Capital of Culture. Preparations are under way with concerted efforts of the government, local authorities, and civic operations.

1.4.3. NGO'S AND DIRECT PROFESSIONAL COOPERATION

Most of the mainstream institutions (museums, galleries, theatres, symphonic orchestras, and especially large festivals) have rich programmes of international exchange. Outstanding venues attracting international artists and works of art are the Opera House, *Müpa* (also called the Palace of Arts, a concert hall which also houses the Ludwig Museum), the *Modem* in Debrecen, and the Kodály Centre in Pécs. *Trafó*, the *A38* ship, and the *MU* theatre are popular and well-functioning spaces especially for innovative and experimental productions, both from Hungary and abroad, which regularly participate in EU projects and are financed by a variety of sources.

The pandemic has halted the international success of *Sziget* Festival for two seasons. Other pop festivals receive fewer foreign bands. Next to the pandemic, the art festival scene in Budapest faces division between the central and local governments: the latter stopped funding the Budapest Spring Festival and its autumn leg on contemporary art and attempts to create new successors instead.

Independent operations are well integrated into their respective international communities, and they are active in several European networks, both as individuals and as creative groups.

2. Current cultural affairs

2.1. Key developments

A fundamental overhaul of the cultural sector has been created *by Act XVI of 2021* (and its accompanying decree) by creating The Foundation for Hungarian Culture “for the purpose of supporting the financing of cultural strategy activities, the predictable operations of institutions in this avail, as well as the plannable future of the beneficiaries of cultural strategy supports”. The format of “Public Interest Foundations Performing Public Functions”, constituted by the Parliament on the same day, allows for their distance also from future governments. Besides 600 million HUF seed money, the law donated to the Foundation three existing nonprofit limited companies, active in managing governmental cultural policies, as well as 20 real estate objects. These include a large castle and valuable brown field terrain in Budapest where an enormous new cultural hub is planned to be erected.

Most of the state universities have been transformed into the same public interest foundations, foundations equipped with important endowments (usually stocks of state enterprises) with boards appointed for a longer period. Among art universities this affects the Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design, the Hungarian Dance University, and the University of Theatre and Film Arts (*Színház- és Filmművészeti Egyetem, SZFE*). The management, faculty and the students of *SZFE* deemed the process a limitation of academic autonomy and carried on a sit in for months at the academy campus; some of them opted for an independent secession academy of theatre and film studies: *Free SZFE*.

A feature of the current cultural policy is the key role of some personalities who fulfil multiple tasks:

- László Baán is director of the now combined Museum of Fine Arts and the National Gallery. He manages the Budapest City Park Project (involving the erection of several new cultural institutions) as well as the renovation of the Opera House.
- Csaba Káel is CEO of the *Műpa* art centre, the director of the new Bartók and Liszt Festivals, and is Government Commissioner for the National Film Institute and the Eszterháza Palace and Cultural Centre.
- László L. Simon, newly appointed director of the National Museum, has been commissioned to undertake an integrated development programme of public museums, including the fusion of the National Museum and the Natural History Museum, and possibly with the Museum of Applied Arts.
- Szabolcs Demeter is Director of the Petőfi Literary Museum and the subsidiary Petőfi Cultural Agency, the anchor of the gigantic endowment destined to serve the newly created Foundation for Hungarian Culture. Furthermore he is preparing the erection of the House of the Hungarian Language, including the venue of the National Library, and he is ministerial commissioner for the integrated development of libraries and of the renewal of the rock scene.

2.2. Cultural rights and ethics

The principles of rights and equal treatment are fully included in the relevant documents of the Constitution, and the respective institutions and officials are in place. These guarantee, among others, the right of information and communication with the media in focus as well as the right to association. These two areas are the subject of constant political debate. The government keeps referring to the above-mentioned legal

guarantees and presents documented arguments about their fulfilment in practice. National and international critics cite numerous instances and indicators on the limitation of the media and on the biased attitude of the government to NGOs. The civic organisations that consistently monitor the decisions of the government are labelled as Soros agencies regardless if they have had relationship to the Hungarian born philanthropist.

Hungary is party to all relevant international agreements, except the Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence which the government refused to ratify. The government has been promoting the Minority SafePack initiative in the European Union, which effort enjoys broad support in society.

Particularly important issues in the rights and ethics area relate to minorities and to sexual orientation which are discussed in the relevant chapters below.

2.3. Role of artists and cultural professionals

In the communist times, artists were considered a privileged group. A large network of holiday resorts and artists' residences served the members of the official professional associations. Their professions were held in official esteem and the system promoted the work of the most eminent. Many of today's awards and fellowship grants originate from the communist era. Dissidents and those whom the power kept alien to the communist conception of culture were excluded from such favours.

The current *NER* System of National Cooperation has returned to placing special emphasis on individuals. The number of artists and cultural professionals who are entitled to lifelong annual annuities above the age of 65 is well above a thousand, and those having reached this age threshold and drawing the monthly annuities total a few hundred people at any time. The various groups and their annuities are listed in chapter 4.1.3.

In addition to the above-mentioned provisions for older artists and the impressive array of public art fellowships, the recently established Térey Grants offer existential backing to 45 middle-aged writers (see chapter 7.2.3).

These signals of the recognition of the role of artists in society are in contrast to the modest conditions and indeed precarity of the greater number of employees in cultural institutions and the artists with self-employed status. Beyond financial hardships, most of the independent art groups complain about signs of demonstrative neglect on the part of the cultural administration of the state.

2.4. Digital policy and developments

Based on the National Info-communication Strategy, conceived in line with EU principles, the government launched the National Digital Development Programme in 2014. Government decisions 1404/2017 and 1175/2018 constituted the Digitising Strategy for Public Collections 2017-2025 (*Közigyűjteményi Digitalizálási Stratégia - KDS*), earmarking 15.2 billion HUF (ca. 50 million EUR) for the first four years. The text of the strategy is available at *KDS* portal (<https://kds.gov.hu/>). It discusses all aspects of the issue, including preceding and related projects, relevant EU measures, foreign samples, and a detailed design of the procedures to follow. An additional White Book elaborates on the standards and technicalities of digitisation. The portal displays the

progression of the programme in detail. In August 2021, there were 5 033 801 documents accessible in the programme. Beyond museum, library, and archival items, there are 27 virtual exhibitions and 23 films of various character and length included.

The Petőfi Literature Museum runs the Digital Literary Academy, which keeps digitised oeuvres of contemporary writers who make their works available on the Internet by contract. Created in 1998, this unique endeavour has between 30 and 40 members at any time. New members are co-opted by old members once a year to replace those who are deceased. The full oeuvre of new members is digitised, put on free display, and their authors receive a monthly allowance four times the value of the official minimum wage. In 2021 the programme hosts the works of 101 past and current members. In addition, the works of earlier writers are digitised: their numbers are close to those of past and present members.

The Hungaricana project of the Library of Parliament aims at sharing Hungarian cultural heritage amassed in various collections. Its special features are historical maps and postcards. This is a free service unlike the huge digital collections of Arcanum Ltd. This private enterprise specialises in Hungarian language periodicals and books, but also features a variety of maps.

2.5. Cultural and social diversity

2.5.1. NATIONAL / INTERNATIONAL INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

Intercultural dialogue is not a priority of cultural policies in Hungary. There are no specific state programmes to support intercultural dialogue.

On the cultural arena, especially on the alternative scene, there are ample international and intercultural interactive projects. Some genres lend themselves to such fusions, e.g., jazz and world music, in which Roma musicians play an eminent role. The government (and the National Fund) subsidise these projects without placing special emphasis on interculturalism.

A special feature of cross-border co-operation is the lively interaction that takes place with the ethnic Hungarian artistic communities and public living across the border in the neighbouring countries – which, by definition, is not "intercultural".

In Hungary there have been no significant migrant communities; the number of migrants and their rate within the entire population has been very low: about 2% of the entire population is of foreign origin. Hungary has not been a popular or attractive destination for migrants.

Due to the rapid processes of assimilation of those minorities (Germans, Slovaks, Croats, Serbs etc.) that remained after various forms of cleansing, their culture has not developed greatly beyond folkloric nostalgia acts. The only intercultural relationship that has been an issue in today's Hungary is the one between the Roma and the majority society. The large number and the geographic spread of this minority group produces occasions for interaction and opportunities for exclusion, inclusion, and assimilation; however, it is difficult to quote proven good practices of conscientious intercultural dialogue on the state level.

There is another relationship that is heavily laden with historical legacy and remains a latent source of tension:

that of Jews who are estimated to represent around 1% of the population. Regardless of the recent phenomena of displaying or reconstructing Jewish art (there are Jewish festivals, cultural centres etc.), one cannot speak of a separate Jewish culture inside Hungarian society, with which to pursue intercultural dialogue.

2.5.2. DIVERSITY EDUCATION

Intercultural education is part of the general framework curricula however no specific subject is dedicated to this issue. The main goals of intercultural education programmes are common national values and identity, world cultures, religions, and traditions in general, and more specifically the Roma integration. Yet Roma culture and history are not an integrated part of the national curricula (i.e. history lessons); instead, Roma are mentioned as a challenge in separate chapters; this caused recent debates about the curricula, which has remained on the civil level.

2.5.3. MEDIA PLURALISM AND CONTENT DIVERSITY

Media pluralism is at the centre of political controversy, receiving international attention. The ruling power asserts that all constitutional and European norms are observed and claims there is a balanced offer. As to critics, some of the main arguments are as follows:

- All five members of the top authority Media Council are selected by *Fidesz*, the ruling party, and are appointed for nine years
- Important independent media outlets have been liquidated or coerced into serving the government
- Public service media allow minimum space to voices other than the government
- Most advertisements by the state and its enterprises are placed with pro-government media
- Government advertisements absorb an exceptionally high share of the budget, and their content is propaganda rather than information, creating an air of permanent campaign for the ruling party

Some of these critical points are touched upon in the 2021 Rule of Law Report of the European Commission.

The legal fundament of the media is the Act on Media Services and Mass Media (CLXXXV/2010). The highest-level competence is embodied in the Media Council. Its chairperson is the CEO of the National Media and Information Authority which carries out the regulation and supervision of public and private media in the country.

Public media, including the National Radio, the National Television, the Duna Television, and the Hungarian Press Agency, are governed by a body called the Public Service Public Foundation (*Közszolgálati Közalapítvány*).

Public TV broadcasts on four channels, while public radio uses three channels. Their main source is the state budget. According to Eurostat-Cofog data, with 0.3% of the GDP, in 2018 and 2019 Hungary spent one of the highest shares on public media in Europe.

The long-term licences of private – commercial and community – channels are awarded by way of public tenders; submissions are evaluated and decided by the Media Council. All media service providers must abide by the programme quotas in the Media Act.

Linear audio-visual media (television) must broadcast European works in over 50%, and Hungarian works in over

33% of their time, and at least 10% of European and at least 8% of Hungarian works must be ordered from independent producers. On-demand media has a minimum quota of 25% European and 10% Hungarian works. Public media must broadcast European works in over 60% and Hungarian works in over 50% of their air time and at least 15% of these works must be ordered from independent producers.

Radio stations must broadcast Hungarian musical works at least 35% of time, of which at least 25% should be less than 5 years old.

Complementing the above measures that protect Hungarian culture, at one point the Media Act promotes cultural diversity: "Linear media service providers with significant market power shall ensure that at least one quarter of the cinematographic works and film series originally produced in a language other than Hungarian, broadcast between 7 pm and 11 pm, shall be available in their original language, with Hungarian subtitles."

Despite the advances of the Internet, about half of Hungarians still regularly watch television, especially the two leading commercial channels. The four channels of the national television network (this includes a sports channel) and a variety of thematic, movie and entertainment channels are lagging behind.

2.5.4. LANGUAGE

The population relocations, during and immediately after World War II, accelerated the process of linguistic assimilation of cultural minorities. This homogenisation culminated the century-old deficit in mother tongue teaching of minorities, the disappearance of closed communities and the growing uniformity caused by mass communication.

In 1995 the government ratified the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in respect to Croatian, German, Romanian, Serbian, Slovak, and Slovene, but not to Romani (as opposed to at least 11 countries in this last respect). In fact, only a minority of Roma people speak a Gypsy dialect.

To counterbalance these factors, the Hungarian Radio's 4th channel (MR4) broadcasts 12 hours (from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.) in the same 13 minority languages each day: two hours in Croatian, German, Romanian, Serbian and Slovak, and half an hour for Slovene, Polish, Greek, Armenian, Ukrainian, Bulgarian, Gypsy (Romani and Boyash), and Ruthenian. There is a 57-minute special programme for Roma every weekday—all Roma in the country speak Hungarian and only 17% of them speak Hungarian as a second language.

The national public television broadcasts 4 regular weekly programmes for Croatian, German, Romanian, Serbian and Slovak minorities, one more for the Roma, and a combined programme for 6 more cultures – these all carry Hungarian subtitles. The average length of all these is 16 hours per month.

Since 2019, an entertainment channel on Roma culture (*Dikh Tv*) has been broadcasting, partly using the Romani language.

Hungary has not had an official language policy or strategy. In 2014 the new Hungarian Language Strategy Institute was set up, which currently operates as a division of the Institute for Hungarian Studies.

The practice of bilingual street-signs is increasing in villages of mixed ethnicity.

2.5.5. GENDER

In the past couple of years “gender” has been at the very centre of Hungarian politics and media attention in various connotations.

The word itself irritates the government, often reduced to representing atypical sexual behaviour. Gender studies have officially been removed from higher education curricula.

Regarding equality of chances, the current government has a double faced record. While the 11% share of women in Parliament is the lowest in the EU, and the parliamentary Subcommittee on Women’s Dignity has been inactive for years, two of the most prominent ministers are women.

Despite frequent divorces and scandals linked to prominent members of the governing elite, the conventional family pattern is proactively promoted: the 9th amendment of the constitution establishes that “the mother is a woman, the father is a man”. A change of sex is legally forbidden and same sex marriages are not allowed in Hungary. A law on paedophilia was in the last round combined with restrictions on sexual education stigmatised as propagating and popularising homosexuality and other diversions.

This last legislation piece has a direct bearing on culture. Without details of its implementation, theatres, film-makers, cinemas, publishers, booksellers etc. are kept in uncertainty about possible punishment for violations.

The me-too phenomenon erupted a few years ago with theatres at the centre; cases of harassment and abuse came to light together with stage directors’ bullying behaviour, often in the angle of the bitter political division of the society.

The listed turbulences do not affect the status that women have over the past century achieved in culture and related fields in our society. The outstanding performance of Hungarian women is acknowledged within and outwith the borders in filmmaking, fine arts, literature, theatre, and other cultural areas, including science and sports.

2.5.6. DISABILITY

The obligations enabling access and availability for people with disabilities connected to the development projects of the European Union have had direct and indirect effects in the cultural arena and beyond. They have accelerated the processes whereby physical and info-communication accessibility is the norm in construction, programmes, and design.

Nevertheless, in the cultural field, no significant regulation, guidelines, or campaigns have emerged regarding disabilities in the past period.

2.6. Culture and social inclusion

An *Act on National and Ethnic Minorities* was passed in 1993 (*Act LXXVII*), declaring minorities to be constituent elements of the state, defining their collective and personal rights. National and ethnic minorities – or, since an amendment in 2011, “nationalities” – are defined as ethnic groups that have been living in Hungary for at least

one hundred years and differ from the majority in language and culture. There are 13 recognised nationalities. In Hungary ethnicity is considered a private matter: systematically collecting data according to ethnic background is not allowed under the Personal Data Protection Law. National censuses and elections of minority governments are all based on voluntary self-identification. In the 2011 census, 6.5% of the population declared that they belong to one of the minority groups. This however is not the exact rate of minorities as 14.1% did not answer this question, while on the other hand multiple identities could be declared, which many people did, resulting in a 107.4% total.

As was discussed above, nurturing the cultural and language requirements of the rapidly dwindling percentage of ethnic minorities is a priority. Its function is the opposite of inclusion, the aim being to reduce the pace of assimilation. To a certain extent this serves to justify the country's involvement in the protection of the Hungarian minorities over the border. This is also why Hungary was among the first to sign and ratify the framework agreement of the Council of Europe on the protection of national minorities. Hungary also takes part in discussions that raise the issue of minorities within the political principles and priorities of the European Union.

In 2020, 200 000 foreigners lived in Hungary, making up about 2% of the population (KSH). Their overwhelming majority (70%) are ethnic Hungarians from a neighbouring state (Romania, Ukraine, Serbia, Slovakia), who do not constitute a cultural minority. Asians are the most dynamically growing minority group, with 19 700 being double the figure for 2012.

In a society where the current ethnic homogeneity is politically a stated asset, it is no wonder that cultural inclusion of immigrants is out of the agenda. NGOs active in intercultural activities feel the stigma of Soros agents upon them.

The official slogan is of a work-based society, which encourages the population to work instead of relying on aid and subsidies. Taking up work is the most favoured process of the inclusion of those who are socially deprived.

The issues of social deprivation and cultural inclusion overlap regarding the Roma or Romanies, one of the 13 recognised minorities. Although considered as politically incorrect, the old name of Gypsy (*cigány*) is still widely used, both in their own community and in official documents. The inclusion of the Roma population is a fundamental challenge in Hungary. During the 2011 census, 315 000 Roma were recorded, i.e., about 3.2% of the population. However, according to the 2015 estimation of the European Roma Rights Centre, approximately 750 000 Roma live in Hungary today. That is 7.5% of the population, many of them living in poverty and exclusion. On the other hand, the greatest number of Roma with full higher education in the whole of Europe is in Hungary, both in absolute and relative terms. Among the first 24 Hungarian members of the European Parliament, two were Roma: one of whom kept her seat in the 2009 elections and was the rapporteur for the EU strategy on Roma Inclusion. Hungarian Roma artists are especially famed in music, both individually and in ensembles.

National federations of minorities have consultative status, and often veto rights in relevant legislative matters. Their elected local government representatives in the villages and towns, and on the national level, have significant rights and growing resources – which, by nature, are to a great extent spent on culture.

As part of the local elections in the autumn of 2019, 318 000 people, making up 4% of the total electorate,

registered to vote for one of the 13 nationality lists. The Roma represented the majority with 211 000, about a third more than in 2014. They were followed by Germans, Slovaks, and Croats with 55 000; 12 000; and 11 000 respectively. Since one can choose multiple identities, the total of the votes is beyond 100%. Under the conditions of rapid assimilation, a considerable share of these votes is cast next to the Hungarian identification, as a tribute of one's ancestors' culture. In the 3 177 settlements altogether 2 188 minority local governments were elected. In hundreds of smaller places there are none, while especially in larger cities more than one minority has elected bodies – in Budapest all 13 are represented.

2.7. Societal impact of arts

Between 1990 and 2010, official cultural policies emphasised the instrumental value of culture in various areas of society and the economy and operators in the field felt obliged to attribute similar roles to their cultural endeavours. When Pécs was European Capital of Culture, the national competition for the title was a declared competition for advantages in urban development and investment. Under the current government less direct and more spiritual impacts are expected from culture. Tourism is one exception, a sector where the contribution of culture is acknowledged.

2.8. Cultural sustainability

The aspect of cultural sustainability was seldom manifested until recently, when a series of decisions were made with the aim to cement the legal and financial sustainability of selected cultural institutions. The most important is the case of the new Foundation for Hungarian Culture, but also the elevated budgetary resources for the representative national institutions “of strategic significance” planned for the following five years. These developments were discussed in chapter 1.3.3.

Likewise, the generous endowments with which eleven universities were transferred into the new format of public interest foundations, including three art academies, are also guarantees of sustainability (and continuity of management).

As well as assuring structural and financial stability of the institutions involved, the positions of the managers and supervisors in charge have been secured for the foreseeable future. This could create an awkward situation if the parliamentary elections due in spring 2020 bring about a change of government

The sustainability of MMA, the Hungarian Arts Academy, was resolved at the outset, as it was written in the new constitution in 2011.

2.9. Other main cultural policy issues

Cultural politics is in a flux, bringing about unpredicted important developments at any moment.

3. Cultural and creative sectors

3.1. Heritage

Monuments

Investments and real estate are priority issues for the government in office since 2010. The area of monuments – built heritage – therefore received attention and was subject to restructuring from early on. The National Office of Cultural Heritage – the top institution of monument protection that had existed since 1872 – was dissolved in 2012 and most of the staff, including its officials in the counties, was transferred to the regional government authorities for general administration. The valuable archive containing the registry of tens of thousands of monuments was passed to an institution named the Forster Centre, which existed for four years. Since 2016 this collection has been held at the Hungarian Museum of Architecture and Monument Protection Documentation Centre, owned and supervised by MMA, the Hungarian Academy of Arts.

The ongoing reorganisation of the institutions of monument protection took a new turn by creating the Lechner Knowledge Centre Nonprofit Ltd under the Minister of the Prime Minister's Office. This institution administers the current official tasks in the heritage protection area. (They run the European Heritage Days in Hungary, as well as other events.)

Since 2017, the bulk of the monuments in public ownership, more than 50 listed buildings, have been operated by NÖF Limited (NÖF National Heritage Protection and Development Non-Profit LTD). Among others, NÖF oversees the National Palace Programme and the National Castle Programme, generously financed by the government, with due attention to their inclusion on the tourism strategy of the country. In this connection the reconstruction of hilltop fortresses is a special focus.

Hungarian achievements in cultural heritage protection are repeatedly acknowledged with EU awards. The restoration of the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music and the Museum of Fine Arts received Europa Nostra prizes in the recent past. Several projects received European Heritage Labels, with the Living Heritage of the city of Szentendre being the latest in 2019.

Attention is given to the built heritage of Hungarians living beyond the border. Teleki László Foundation, a private non-profit organisation, with roots in the 1980s, gets regular support from the National Cooperation Fund (*Nemzeti Együttműködés Alap*) of the government for related projects. The key institution in this remit is the Foundation for the Preservation of the Central European Built Heritage – *Közép-európai Épített Örökség Megőrző Alapítvány*. At its establishment in 2020, the government endowed it with shares of state owned businesses and several buildings. This includes a magnificent 19th century hotel on the main square of Satu Mare in Romania.

Museums

Preventive archaeological explorations occurring as part of investment projects offered unprecedented opportunities for excavations and subsequent activities especially at the time of a massive programme of motorway construction. Such exercises also produced additional revenues for museums. In 2011, however, conditions took a u-turn, benefiting investors in terms of financial burden and deadlines, which in 2012 were

crowned by switching primary responsibility for the entire scope of built heritage, including archaeology, from the Minister of Culture to that of the interior, and later to the Prime Minister's Office. Since 2018, this domain is overseen by the Department of Archaeology of the Deputy State Secretariat for Architecture, Construction and Heritage of the Prime Minister's Office.

EU funds have facilitated the reconstruction of the Hungarian Museum of Natural History (*Természettudományi Múzeum*). The announcement therefore that the National University of Public Service would be moved to the building caused surprise and concern. The first phase of the adaptation to the new function has taken place – based on additional EU financial support – and now the new university and the museum share the building. The longer-term solution is still up in the air.

Since 2019, with a new director, the Petőfi Literary Museum has become a power centre of Hungarian culture. After a strange sequence of steps, the gigantic Foundation for Hungarian Culture is a kind of annex to it, which has nothing to do with museum policies.

A recent development is the appointment of another cultural policy strongman László L. Simon as General Director of the National Museum in 2021, whose declared mission is to carry out a fusion between the National Museum and the Natural History Museum, and possibly the Museum of Applied Arts.

Entrance to state museums was free for a four-year period, but fees were re-introduced in 2008 after an unsuccessful test period. The museum profession has stated that the loss of box office revenue is not sufficiently compensated by the government.

Hungarikums

A Hungarian speciality is the pyramid of “values”, regulated by a special law since 2012. Towns and villages are encouraged to set up their Committees of Values which select and administer their Repositories of Values. These include buildings, objects, foods, customs, phenomena etc. on a very broad scale. Committees on county level choose items to add to the regional repositories. Parallel to this, values important for the Hungarian people abroad are also collected by seven committees in the neighbouring countries. The top level is the 21-strong national Hungarikum Committee that decides on the repository of Hungarikums. Currently, in September 2021 the list includes 58 items, with strong a contingent of intangible cultural heritage. The collection includes the Hungarian items on the Unesco lists of World Heritage and Intangible Heritage.

3.2. Archives and libraries

The nationwide network of public libraries operates a strong professional tradition, with coordination and guidance of the Library Institute within the Széchényi National Library. The services of small settlements of less than 5 000 inhabitants are overseen and assured by the county libraries. Local libraries have adapted to the current protocols of European public libraries: they run programmes for the inhabitants, with children a priority and librarians are active on social media and thus pose a challenge to the network of houses of culture. The digital shift of library operations has advanced, profiting also from EU funds. At the same time librarians complain about restricted resources on salaries, running costs and acquisitions.

A burning issue is the location of the National Széchényi Library. Its main building in Buda Castle is increasingly

inadequate for its needs but no decision and plans have emerged about the future of this national institution.

The Law on Archives merged the 19 county archives into the structure of the National Archive. This initiative, among others, means that they can be accessed through one common website. Budapest and a few more cities have their own archives. Operations of the libraries have been streamlined and become increasingly more open and user-friendly.

Re-drawing the Canon of National Culture is taking place. Literature is one sphere where conservative and/or nationalist authors of the interwar period are being promoted by the authorities, including in school curricula.

3.3. Performing arts

The performing arts, more specifically theatres, can be considered representative and symptomatic of the cultural policy developments in Hungary. The theatre profession is sharply divided along political lines; the role of a few – or rather one – influential person is symptomatic of the about the patronal character of the society. This is not counterbalanced by the composition of the 24-member National Performing Arts Reconciliation Council, several members of which are delegated by organisations outside the *NER* halo: its majority, nevertheless, votes in support of the government.

Divisions in the sharing of public theatres in Hungary between the government and the municipality were manifested in 2019 when the opposition won the local government elections (compared to the earlier joint supervision and financing). The formerly approved national showcase of theatres (*POSZT* – National Theatre Reunion in Pécs) was discontinued, and loyalty appears to bias the distribution of financial resources and distinctions. Independent ensembles, which play an important role in the Hungarian performing arts, are discouraged, especially if they put critical content on stage. On the other side, shows and performers of dubious value are in disproportional favour.

The division has spilled over to the top-level educational institute, the University of Film and Theatre Arts *SZFE*, which is described at 2.1.

3.4. Visual arts and crafts

There is no special strategy and no peculiar developments in this area. Relevant processes in the museum and higher education sectors (especially the exhibitions in the National Gallery and the upgrading of the MOME Moholy Nagy University) have important impact on this area.

3.5. Cultural arts and creative industries

3.5.1. GENERAL DEVELOPMENTS

Despite frequent reference to the strategic importance of the creative industries, no coherent strategy of legislation exists. It does not occur in the communication of the State Secretariat for Culture. A Creative Industries Strategy 2020-2030 was presented in November 2020, endorsed by the Ministry for Innovation and Technology, but the document is inaccessible, and no follow-up took place.

3.5.2. BOOKS AND PRESS

In 2019, the total sales of the book market were estimated at 55.5 billion HUF by the Hungarian Publishers and Booksellers Association, practically the same as a year earlier. In 2020 the preliminary figures suggest some decline but 2021 promises some growth once more. The average number of copies sold per title keeps decreasing and has slipped below 2000 copies.

The book culture of the country has particularly suffered by the cancellation of the International Book Festival and the Book Week. The latter is an open-air event with a hundred years' tradition; in 2021 it was finally arranged at a rescheduled date.

Table 2: Number of published titles, 1990-2020

Year	Number of titles	Of which textbooks	Million copies	Of which textbooks
1990	8 322	1 230	125.7	22.2
2000	9 592	1 595	36.9	11.1
2010	12 997	2 135	34.4	11.8
2019	13 901	2 434	31.7	9.6
2020	14 694	2 115	28.0	10.3

Source: Central Statistical Office.

Despite some growth recorded in the past couple of years, sales revenues of digital books are about 2% of the total turnover in Hungary.

From a cultural point of view, the continuous shrinking of the print runs of printed quality magazines is deplorable. They try to survive by running website versions or transferring entirely to the internet.

3.5.3. AUDIOVISUAL AND INTERACTIVE MEDIA

Most portals, including the ones with important cultural content, are gradually shifting toward various payment models.

3.5.4. MUSIC

The music branch suffered the most from the pandemic. For rock groups, festivals are the main sort of revenue, before ad hoc and club concerts, broadcasts, streaming or recorded music.

Table 3: Sales of recorded music, 2018-2020

	2018	2019	2020
Physical sales (vinyl, cds etc.)	1.43	1.45	1.31
Digital sales (streaming, downloads etc.)	2.15	2.96	4.15

Source: https://www.mahasz.hu/piaci_adatok

Table 4: Composition of digital sales in 2020

Digital Sales	International	Domestic	Classical	Not musical content	Total
Single	61%	37%	1%	0%	100%
Album	54%	23%	14%	10%	100%
Video	14%	31%	56%	0%	100%
All downloads	54%	32%	11%	4%	100%
Digital content					
Mobile phone	59%	41%	0%	0%	100%
Subscription audio	83%	16%	1%	0%	100%
Advertisement based	84%	15%	1%	0%	100%
Video	45%	53%	1%	1%	100%
All streaming	74%	25%	1%	0%	100%
All digital sales	73%	25%	1%	0%	100%

Source: https://www.mahasz.hu/piaci_adatok

Classical music occupies a strong position in cultural policies. 16 symphony orchestras receive regular public support. Care is given to the condition of national and local concert halls and over 3000 pianos of orchestras, concert halls and music schools have been restored recently from public funds.

The House of Hungarian Music in Budapest City Park is soon to open in a futuristic building.

3.5.5. DESIGN AND CREATIVE SERVICES

There are no specific policies that promote design or architecture in Hungary.

In Budapest, two non-profit centres run very rich programmes and have an important impact on contemporary architecture: one is *KÉK*– Contemporary Architecture Centre, the other *FUGA* – Budapest Centre of Architecture.

The Hungarian Museum of Architecture was established in 1968 and the scope of its collection encompasses materials related to architecture and architectural history. It has no permanent building and currently exists in combination with the Monument Protection Documentation Centre, and is maintained by *MMA*, the Hungarian Academy of Arts.

3.5.6. CULTURAL AND CREATIVE TOURISM

Tourism is one of the top priorities of the current government. The Hungarian Tourism Agency disposes of sizeable funds, with subsidised investments in accommodation ranging from luxury hotels to rural tourism. High level sports events like the 2017 World Aquatics Championships or UEFA Euro 2020, and events like the International Eucharistic Concerts and a Hunting and Nature Exhibition (both in 2021) absorb billions of HUF. Until 2020 – before the capital was taken over by the opposition – the Budapest Spring and Autumn Festivals had a separate line in the central budget, and the *Sziget* Rock Festival (and its dependent festivals in the countryside) were considered gems of the tourism offer. Still, no concept or strategy has been created on cultural tourism, with the word culture missing from the 2016 festival law or its 2021 amendment.

Next to one-dimension festivals of rock, classical music, or theatre, events that combine all these and more (films, circus, literature, debates etc.) and offer an environment of popular festivities are a valuable feature of the Hungarian festival scene – catering for domestic tourists in majority.

4. Law and legislation

4.1. General legislation

4.1.1. CONSTITUTION

The two-thirds majority in the Parliament, which is required to effect changes in the text of the constitution, and which *Fidesz* (officially in coalition with the Christian-Democratic *KDNP* party) gained at the 2010 elections, was used to fully re-write and adopt the basic law by spring 2011. The preamble of this new Fundamental Law of Hungary, the National Avowal of Faith, contains references to culture:

We commit to promoting and safeguarding our heritage, our unique language, Hungarian culture, the languages and cultures of national minorities living in Hungary, along with all man-made and natural assets of the Carpathian Basin... We believe that our national culture is a rich contribution to the diversity of European unity... We respect the freedom and culture of other nations...

Specific references to culture:

Article P

All ... cultural assets shall form part of the nation's common heritage, and the State and every person shall be obliged to protect, sustain, and preserve them for future generations.

Article X.

(1) Hungary shall ensure the freedom of scientific research and artistic creation...

(3) Hungary shall defend the scientific and artistic freedom of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and the Hungarian Academy of Arts.

It is deplorable, however, that the most often cited part of the old Constitution with regard to culture has kept its ambiguous original wording:

XI. cikk

(1) Minden magyar állampolgárnak joga van a művelődéshez.

(2) Magyarország ezt a jogot a közművelődés kiterjesztésével és általánossá tételével ... biztosítja

The word *művelődés* is commonly understood to be broader than education proper (for which there are also more specific terms), and includes the activities of participating in or "consuming" culture. Unfortunately the term is usually translated into foreign languages as education, including the official translation on the website of the government. Luckily, the next line better conveys the true meaning of the concept by using "community culture".

Article XI

(1) Every Hungarian citizen shall have the right to education.

(2) Hungary shall ensure this right by extending and generalising community culture...

This state of affairs creates the false understanding that the Hungarian constitution does not specify cultural rights as stipulated in Article 1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of the United Nations. Nevertheless, these passages have little direct impact on actual cultural phenomena in the country.

The hundreds of resolutions of the Constitutional Court have almost never touched upon this part of the constitution, and never in relation to culture.

Similarly, the records of the activities of the parliamentary Ombudsman for civil rights contain negligible instances that only relate to cultural rights.

4.1.2. ALLOCATION OF PUBLIC FUNDS

The cultural budget of the government, however, traditionally lacks transparency, which renders international comparisons impossible without additional research. In fact, due to the dispersed nature of competences for culture, one cannot talk about one "cultural budget". The budget section under the responsibility of the State Secretary for Culture contains aggregations like "public collections" (i.e. libraries, museums, archives directly supervised by the Ministry of Human Resources) to which considerable amounts are earmarked without specification or listing.

As another area of opacity, a quarter of the budget of the National Cultural Fund is at the discretion of the minister: the grants from this source are subsequently listed on the website of the Fund. The amount allocated via public calls of the Fund has stagnated at 7-8 billion HUF a year. The Fund, where the boards at least partly are still composed as "coalitions", has lost its hegemonic role in cultural finances, with the emergence of several competitive financial sources: Petőfi Cultural Agency, MMA, and directly from the Ministry for Human Resources.

One more aspect that makes a full and clear overview difficult is the high proportion of finances outside the frame of the annual budget. In 2019, as much as a third of the cultural expenditure of the government took the form of ad hoc decrees.

A traditional feature of the Hungarian system of cultural finances is the contribution from the central budget to the "cultural tasks" of the local governments. This does not appear in the chapter on the Ministry for Human Capacities in the national budget but in a separate chapter named Assistance to Local Governments. In 2021, it was 35.0 billion HUF, and for 2022, 35.3 billion has been earmarked. Beyond subsidising targets like specific kinds of cultural institutions, each local government receives general cultural normative assistance; the majority of municipalities nevertheless spend several times more on culture than the "per capita" central redistribution, which has a symbolic role only.

4.1.3. SOCIAL SECURITY FRAMEWORKS

Hungary has moved away from the communist era when nearly all cultural actors were either civil employees or

members of the monolithic artistic associations who enjoyed benefits comparable to salaried persons. Many people found themselves on the margins of the social security frameworks because they had been coerced into the position of quasi entrepreneurs instead of the more secure employee status, so that the employer (often a public institution like a theatre or a museum) could save on the social insurance fees. It is estimated that today over 75% of actors, dancers, musicians, arts organisers, technicians, designers, and other cultural operators working for a variety of clients are self-employed.

This issue was behind the introduction of *EKHO* in 2005, a regime tailored to taxpayers in the creative sector, allowing for simplified contributions to common charges (called literally "public burden"). The scheme has so far survived the many changes in the taxation system. In 2021, the condition of this status is that the annual income of the person remains below HUF 60 million (about EUR 170 000). The *EKHO* Law (Act CXX/2005) states that the minimum mandatory tax base for social security contribution payments is the minimum wage, while the rest of the citizen's income should be taxed at a 15% rate, which includes social security duties. *EKHO* is open to employees and self-employed people, including pensioners.

Independents are not able to claim unemployment benefit. Sickness benefit may be covered by paying into a private insurance policy. Self-employed people in the cultural sector can pay into a private pension fund to top up the state pension; nevertheless, many of them tend to pay social insurance only after the mandatory minimum monthly wage upon their own choice, risking their old-age care. The several hundreds of holders of all state awards listed under chapter 7.2.3, however, enjoy a lavish complementary pension after the age of 65.

This arrangement is crowned by the life-time allowances of the members of *MMA*. In 2021, full *MMA* members get 410 000 HUF a month, about 1 150EUR, close to the average income in the country, on top of their regular pension or salary. Corresponding members' monthly allowance is 340 000 HUF. The Artists of the Nation (see chapter 7.2.3) receive 23 times the official minimum retirement pension of 28 500 HUF beyond the age of 65. Widows, widowers, and orphans are also entitled to certain allowances.

All these systems historically trace back to the establishment of high life-time allowances to members of the Academy of Sciences, imitating the Soviet model in the 1940s, spreading over to culture. Beyond the acknowledgment and stimulation of cultural achievement, these allowances develop surreptitious loyalty to the state.

4.1.4. TAX LAWS

There is a single 15% income tax rate for individuals. Family taxation was introduced to provide extra incentives to families having at least one child. Families with three children are exempt from personal income tax. From 2022, income of youths below 25 years of age is also non-taxable. State prizes, awards and fellowships are tax exempt. Corporate tax is one of the lowest in Europe at 9%. Social security payments are usually calculated at 27 % above the gross salary and the 15% personal income tax is due on the "super-gross" salary which includes social security costs.

Artists and cultural operators can choose between a variety of statuses for their work and thus taxation:

- Private individuals with a tax number for activities without special permit.
- Self-employed: in some fields like actors, painters, translators etc. this is the dominant form.
- Member of a limited or limited liability company.

- Employee.
- Public servant: until 2020, people employed at public cultural institutions (museums, theatres etc.) used to be in this category.

The self-employed, including members of limited companies, have simplified tax regimes to choose from:

- *EKHO*, the method of simplified contributions to common charges was discussed in chapter 4.1.3.
- Flat-rate of tax
- Item-based tax on small tax enterprises (*kata*)
- Small business tax (*kiva*)
- Regular business/corporate tax (*tao*)

Each regime has its specific conditions (which are occasionally modified) and advantages.

Conversely to corporation tax, VAT is the highest in Europe at 27%. Books, journals and free live music (at restaurants and free community events) benefit from a 5% reduced rate. The intermediate 18% rate applies to paid open-air concerts – achieved by the festival lobby in 2018. The high VAT rate makes entry tickets as well as all expenses linked to cultural activities more expensive.

Associations, foundations as well as non-profit enterprises can—by adhering to specific conditions—qualify as public benefit organisations. These organisations are exempt from corporate tax if their business income is less than 15% of the total turnover. Other organisations – without a public benefit status – are exempt only if the total annual turnover is less than 10 million HUF, with less than 10% business income.

Businesses – companies and individual entrepreneurs – can deduct 20% of the value of donations given to public benefit organisations from their tax base, and in the case of multi-annual pledges, this rate is 40%.

Philanthropic support to cultural organisations is not particularly widespread. Most of these tax benefits affect other sectors (social and health care, education etc.), and the bureaucratic regulations attached render donations complicated both for the donor and receiver. Donating to culture is also negatively affected by the priority that the government gives to tax benefits that support sports, football teams in particular. A similar tax credit arrangement was introduced for theatres and orchestras between 2012 and 2018, which with time became an important income for the performing arts sector. Due to blatant frauds and abuse the government abruptly stopped that scheme.

Regarding sponsorship proper, tax exemption is difficult to conceive: the entire amount can be deduced from the tax base as marketing expenses anyway. The number of adverts displayed at most projects (exhibitions, theatre performances, festivals, and especially films) indicates that businesses support culture in many ways, including direct financial sponsorship.

Tax legislation has greater significance for investments. In this respect, the Film Law (2004) stands out, offering a 20% tax break on film making. The tax credit attracts the shooting of international productions and provides incentives to some local projects. It has also created a favourable environment for investment in studios, the largest of which is the Alexander Korda Studios at Etyek. These schemes have been brought in line with the requirements of EU regulations.

There is one more speciality in the Hungarian tax system – Act CXXVI/1996 on "1%" – has evoked great attention outside the country as well. When taxpayers submit their annual tax returns, they can allocate 1% of their income tax to a non-governmental organisation of their choice by indicating its tax identification number (also another 1% to a registered church, if they so wish). According to the data disclosed by the tax authorities, about a third of tax-payers channelled 9.6 billion HUF from the tax on their 2019 income to 27 854 organisations – in recent years both numbers have slowly descended. The full list of recipients is available on the website of the tax authority. It is next to impossible, however, to identify the share of culture from the spreadsheet of over 27 thousand lines as the names of the organisations do not always provide clues about their profile. The share for culture is nevertheless around 1% only in this scheme.

4.1.5. LABOUR LAWS

Artists and other cultural actors can work in the following forms: as employees, individual entrepreneurs (sole traders), corporate entrepreneurs, as well as freelance workers.

Those employed in public cultural institutions were civil employees until the end of 2020. Their labour conditions were regulated by the acts on the civil service and on public finances. These contained the detailed schedules and criteria of salaries and wages – with many direct references to cultural and artistic jobs – updated each year.

Since January 2021, cultural workers of public cultural institutions are employed on the same footing as elsewhere. Everyone had to receive the same initial salary as in 2020, but the amount is less determined by law than before. The minimum monthly wage in 2021 is HUF 167 400 (about EUR 470), and 219 000 (about EUR 620) for qualified positions, with full secondary education. Gross average earning in the country is about twice this latter amount.

Social partnership functions relatively effectively on the national level but it is less so, or even non-existent, in respective cultural sub-sectors.

The provisions in the pensions system permit performers to retire early, e.g., dancers and some other performing artists under certain circumstances.

There are no specific provisions concerning the involvement of volunteers that are relevant to culture. Act LXXXVIII/2005 provides the necessary legal environment and protection for public voluntary work.

4.1.6. COPYRIGHT PROVISIONS

Hungary follows the continental, *droit d'auteur* tradition. The *Act on Authors' Rights LXXVII/1999* closely observes requirements of the *acquis* of the European Union. This Law, among others, specifies the rights attached to transmitting and downloading via the Internet.

The Law stipulates levies on all kinds of equipment used for recording, storing and playing audio-visual content, such as blank cassettes, mobile phones, personal computers and so on. They are determined by the Minister for Justice each year and collected by Artisjus, the Hungarian collecting society. Importers and manufacturers of copy machines and related equipment pay levies to the Hungarian Alliance of Reprographic Rights. Schools and public libraries are exempt from paying this fee.

In 2020, the net copyright income of Artisjus, the Hungarian collecting society, was 14.8 billion HUF, which due to the pandemic is much less than the 18.3 billion HUF in the previous year. From the 14.8 billion, the society paid 15.9 billion to rights' holders and 2.0 billion to the National Cultural Fund. This latter transfer is regulated by law to finance a programme for young pop-rock talents: the sum corresponds to 25% of the "blank cassette" revenue.

The associations addressing cultural rights management are contained in this table. Focusing on their specific target groups, they address copyright and cultural rights' protection as legal bodies.

Table 5: Associations addressing cultural rights management

Name	Name in English	Stakeholders	Web address
<i>ARTISJUS Magyar Szerzői Jogvédő Iroda Egyesület</i>	Society ARTISJUS Hungarian Bureau for the Protection of Authors' Rights	Composers, lyricists, literary authors, audiovisual artists, film writers, film producers, visual and applied artists, performing artists, phonogram producers	www.artisjus.hu
<i>Magyar Reprográfiai Szövetség</i>	Hungarian Alliance for Reprographic Rights	Publishers, film producers, designers	www.reprografia.hu
<i>Művészeti Szakszervezetek Szövetsége Előadóművészi Jogvédő Iroda</i>	Bureau for the Protection of Performers' Rights	Performing artists	www.eji.hu
<i>FILMJUS Filmszerzők és Előállítók Szerzői Jogvédő Egyesület</i>	FilmJUS Hungarian Society for the Protection of Audio-Visual Authors' and Producers' Rights	Cinematic creators (directors, camera operators), film writers, film producers	www.filmjus.hu
<i>HUNGART Vizuális művészek Közös Jogkezelő Társasága Egyesület</i>	HUNGART Collecting Society of Hungarian Visual Artists	Visual and applied artists, photographers, architects, industrial designers, creators of creative technical facilities	www.hungart.org
<i>Magyar Hanglezemző Szövetség</i>	Hungarian Recording Industry Association	Phonogram producers	www.mahasz.hu
<i>Magyar Szak- és Szépirodalmi Szerzők és Kiadók Reprográfiai Egyesülete</i>	Society for the Reprographic Rights of Professional Non-Fiction, Fiction Authors and Publishers	Literary authors, scientific literature authors, book publishers and magazine publishers	www.maszre.hu
<i>Magyar Irodalmi Szerzői Jogvédő és Jogkezelő Egyesület</i>	Hungarian Literary Copyright Protection and Management Association	Literary authors	https://miszje.hu
<i>Reproress Magyar Lapkiadók Reprográfiai Egyesülete</i>	Repro press Association for the Reprographic Rights of Publishers	Publishers of periodicals	www.pressjus.hu

4.1.7. DATA PROTECTION LAWS

Hungarian data protection laws and their implementation are rather strict. Until 2011 there was a special Ombudsman for data protection, whose functions have been taken over by the National Authority for Data Protection and Freedom of Information.

4.1.8. LANGUAGE LAWS

No piece of legislation has any effect on cultural or general life in Hungary. (The restriction of mother tongue use of the Hungarian minority in Ukraine, by the April 2019 language law, has stirred general resentment in Hungary.)

4.1.9. OTHER AREAS OF GENERAL LEGISLATION

Regional division of jurisdiction has been an open issue ever since the regime change. The county system was established by the founding king St Stephen in the 11th century – which makes it hard to exert major changes. In 2012, most of the cultural functions, especially maintaining institutions like county museums and libraries, were transferred to cities.

The 19 historical counties (*megye*) have elected local governments, differently from the seven NUTS (nomenclature of territorial units for statistics) regions that are the basic units regarding EU regional development programmes.

The 174 districts (*járás*) do not have local governments or chief administrators. The district offices fulfil roles in specific areas of public administration but have no competence in culture.

Besides the central government, the only level that really matters is that of the 3 178 local (municipal) governments. This number includes 346 towns as well as 23 districts of Budapest.

4.2. Legislation on culture

4.2.1. GENERAL LEGISLATION ON CULTURE

In Hungary, there is no comprehensive law on culture or art. Act CXL/1997 is often referred to as the Law on Culture, but in fact it regulates three sub-sectors only: libraries, museums and local socio-cultural activities. The other fundamental piece of cultural legislation is *Act LXIV/2001 on the Protection of Cultural Heritage*. After 2010, when *Fidesz*, the governing party gained constitutional power, the only constituting cultural policy Act of the *NER* was the Act on the Hungarian Arts Academy – *MMA*. Otherwise, a series of parliamentary acts kept modifying the earlier basic cultural laws, including ones on the archives and films. Between 2010 and 2019, no fewer than eight acts made wide ranging changes to the Cultural Heritage Act of 2001, in connection with the several stages of the fundamental overhaul of this sector.

A new era began in 2019, when the Prime Minister announced a focus on the cultural transformation of the country, in the ideological and political sense of the term. The Acts on the National Council for Culture and the Institutions of Cultural Strategy, as well as on the Foundation for Hungarian Culture, brought about a totally new hierarchy of decision-making and of institutions. The accelerated reorganisation of the cultural arena went hand in hand with that of the institutional structures of higher education, research, and media. A large number of government decrees accompanied and specified these two parliamentary acts.

List of the existing cultural legislation

Title of the Act	Year of adoption
Act on Archives	LXVI / 1995
Act on Libraries, Museums, Archaeology and Local Culture ("cultural law")	CXL / 1997 and LXVII / 2017
Act on the Protection of Cultural Heritage	LXIV / 2001
Act on Films	II / 2004

Act on Performing Arts	XCIX / 2008 and XVII / 2020
Act on the Hungarian Academy of Arts	CIX / 2011
Act on Hungarian World Heritage	LXXVII / 2011
Act on the Special Protection of Borrowed Cultural Property	XCV / 2012
Act on the National Council for Culture and the Institutions of Cultural Strategy	CXXIV / 2019
Act on Modifying the Public Employment Status of People in Public Cultural Institutions	XXXII / 2020
Act on the 2023 European Capital of Culture	CIXII / 2020
Act on the Foundation for Hungarian Culture	XVI / 2021

List of laws with relevance to culture

Title of the Act	Year of adoption
Acts on Public Finance and Public Servants	XXXIII / 1992 and CXCIX/ 2011
Act on the Use of a Specified Amount of Personal Income Tax in Accordance with the Taxpayers' Instruction ("1% law")	CXXVI / 1996
Act on Authors' Rights	LXXVI / 1999
Act on the Hungarian Language	XCVI / 2001
Act on Volunteering	LXXXVIII / 2005
Act on Simplified Contribution to Public Charges (EKHO)	CXX / 2005
Act on Media Services and Mass Communication	CLXXXV / 2010
Act on Civic Society	CLXXV / 2011
Act on National and Ethnic Minorities	CLXXIX / 2011
Act on Local Governments	CLXXXIX / 2011
Act on Tourism	CLVI / 2016
Acts on Art University Foundations and Transfers of Assets to them	XXXV / 2020 and LXXII / 2020
Act on Public Interest Foundations Performing Public Functions	IX / 2021

Hungary has ratified all the relevant international conventions and is party to all treaties, but they have never exerted significant effect on processes inside the country. The monitoring of those conventions, and the ensuing reporting activities are in most case formal and superficial, which was also the case regarding the obligations of the country within the Soviet Bloc.

4.2.2. LEGISLATION ON CULTURE AND NATURAL HERITAGE

The Act on Archives was passed in 1995, and an Act was passed in 2001 on the Protection of Cultural Heritage, covering the areas of archaeology, built heritage, and protection of movable objects. These Acts define the specific ownership requirements of state, local government and private (including Church) enterprises, and stipulate the rules for the protection and utilisation of heritage. After 2010, the legal environment of archaeological explorations was modified several times; the area is now overseen by the Prime Minister's Office. Archaeologists complain about the increase in economic considerations over science in policies and legislation.

The 2011 Act on Hungarian World Heritage aims to give a solid legal and institutional basis to the efficient implementation of the World Heritage Convention in Hungary and to ensure the efficient management of the eight Hungarian sites on the World Heritage list.

The modification of the 2001 Cultural Heritage Law in 2011 established the new concepts of National Memory Sites and Historic Memory Sites, with 17 items belonging to the first, and 52 to the second list.

Due to the towering insurance costs connected with the blockbuster exhibitions of the *Szépművészeti Múzeum*, in 2012 a law was passed with urgency, which stipulates a state guarantee for borrowings of such a scale: the Act on the Special Protection of Borrowed Cultural Goods.

4.2.3. LEGISLATION ON PERFORMANCE AND CELEBRATION

The Act on Performing Arts in 2008 – prepared in close co-operation with professional organisations – was considered a major achievement in cultural policy by the previous government. It regulated the conditions of access to state subsidies. Theatres and orchestras were registered in categories, the number of performances being the main criterion. A special aspect was the guarantee of at least 10% of public grants for independent, alternative, or experimental theatre groups.

In 2011 substantial amendments were made: the theatre part was practically fully re-written. The categories were reduced to three: National, Preferential, and Other performing arts organisations. Several of the automatic decisions in the former Act were removed, thereby giving more room for quality judgements. A 24-strong National Performing Arts Council for Reconciliation of Interests was established. Upon their recommendation – with minor adjustments – the Minister appoints the National and Preferential performing arts organisations. The list is updated each year: in 2021 there were 25 National organisations (10 theatres, 4 dance groups, and 11 orchestras), as well as 58 Preferential organisations (42 theatres, 5 dance groups, and 11 orchestras).

The guaranteed share of the subsidies for the third group – the independent scene – was not kept. These organisations apply for subsidies in the frame of annual public calls, targeting the respective categories.

4.2.4. LEGISLATION ON VISUAL ARTS AND CRAFTS

There is no specific legislation in the field of visual art. The Act on Authors' rights stipulates fees after the first sale of art works, and levies after the sales of works in the public domain. The rate is 4% in the first case, going down to 0.25% on a regressive scale.

4.2.5. LEGISLATION ON BOOKS AND PRESS

Hungary has no separate law to support literature and writers.

Libraries are regulated in detail by the 1997 Act on Culture and the 2011 Act on Local Governments, the latter stipulating that local governments are “particularly” obliged to assure library supply. In settlements with a few hundred inhabitants only, the local governments fulfil this obligation by reaching joint agreements with neighbouring towns or villages. The 1999 Copyright Act regulates public lending right payments, administered by the Hungarian Literary Copyright Protection and Management Association (*MISZJE*).

4.2.6. LEGISLATION ON AUDIOVISUAL AND INTERACTIVE MEDIA

The 2010 Media Law contains detailed prescriptions to broadcasters about social and cultural diversity. Special emphasis is placed on the Hungarian minorities living abroad.

The mandatory thresholds of programme quotas are in line with European Union regulations.

Table 6: Minimum percentage of annual broadcasting time:

	Broadcasters	Public service broadcasters
Programmes of European origin	50%	60%
Hungarian programmes produced in Hungary	33%	50%
Programmes by independent producers or less than five-year-old European programmes	10%	15%
Less than five-year-old Hungarian programmes by independent producers	8%	

There are no special press quotas in Hungary.

Attracting international productions to shoot films in Hungary is a government priority. This is facilitated with frequent modifications to the 2004 *Film Law* and related government decrees. These improvements benefit Hungarian filmmakers as well.

4.2.7. LEGISLATION ON DESIGN AND CREATIVE SERVICES

There are no laws for design or creative services.

5. Arts and cultural education

5.1. Policy and institutional overview

The arts have traditionally had an important position in Hungarian public education. Literature – known simply as “Hungarian” – is taught in a relatively high number of weekly hours, thanks to the role that mother-tongue literature played in the historical process of constructing national identity. The strong personal influence of Zoltán Kodály, composer and reformer of music education, led in the 1950s to frequent singing classes in the lower grades, which still prevails.

Education in art and music in Hungary is available at elementary, secondary, and tertiary level schools. Institutions of basic education in art and music are accessible all over the country. At the secondary level there are 47 schools. Higher level professional art education and training have a long-standing tradition: the University of Fine Arts was established in 1871, and the Franz Liszt University of Music, one of the most prestigious music universities around the world, was founded in 1875 (with the personal involvement of Liszt).

5.2. Arts in schools

The latest curriculum of 2012 defines key competences, development fields and educational objectives. None of the development fields is related directly to art education. One of the nine key competences is aesthetic / artistic awareness and expression (in accordance with EU recommendations).

Table 7: Recommended amounts of lessons (in %) per education fields, National Curricula, 2012

Education Fields	1-4th grade	5-6th grade	7-8th grade	9-10th grade	11-12th grade
Hungarian Language and Literature	27-40	15-22	10-15	10-15	10
Foreign Languages	2-6	10-18	10-15	12-20	13
Mathematics	13-20	13-18	10-15	10-15	10
Society	4-8	6-10	10-15	8-15	10
Nature	4-8	6-10	15-20	15-20	10
Environmental Studies	-	2-4	4-8	5-8	-
Arts	14-20	10-16	8-15	8-15	6
Informatics	2-5	4-8	4-8	4-8	4
Lifestyle	4-8	4-10	4-10	4-8	-
Sport	20-25	20-25	15-20	14-20	15

A minimum of two weekly "Singing and music" lessons and one "Drawing" lesson are included in the curriculum of primary and secondary schools.

Table 8: Number of pupils and pupil/teacher ratios in basic art schools in 2020

Field / Domain	Pupils	Pupils per teacher

Classical music	70 800	6.3
Folk music	6 000	9.0
Jazz	900	7.3
Electro-acoustic music	2 200	7.1
Dance	59 100	37.8
Visual arts and crafts	31 000	26.9
Theatre	9 300	13.5

Source: https://dari.oktatas.hu/kozerdeku_index

5.3. Higher arts and cultural education

In the 2020/2021 academic year, the 6 737 students in the arts represented 2.7% of all enrolled at tertiary education. At BA level, students can choose from 19 higher educational programmes, while at MA level, 45 are available. These include 8 educational programmes – e.g., acting and painting – that stayed in their old one-tier system apart from the majority within the Bologna system

The latest development was introduced in chapter 2.1: three out of the five art universities have been transformed into nominally autonomous “public interest foundations”:

- Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design
- The Hungarian Dance University
- University of Theatre and Film Arts(SZFE)

The University of Fine Arts and the Franz Liszt University of Music remained as state institutions.

5.4. Out-of-school arts and cultural education

One of the functions of the extensive network of the houses of culture is running training courses in various art forms. Participating in various amateur art groups involves continuous training offered by professionals.

5.5. Vocational and professional training

In 2015, a non-profit limited company was founded with the aim of running a Writers’ Academy and related activities, subsidised in the following two years, with a budget of 1 950 000 HUF. The project has since launched and has published works by over a hundred young writers.

6. Cultural participation and consumption

6.1. Policies and programmes

The provision of basic cultural supply is a stated component of the cultural policy of the government. Houses of culture are key in this endeavour, both by involving citizens in their activities and by providing venues. Nevertheless, there is no general strategy dedicated to audience development.

Events such as the World Days of Music, the Day of Open Heritage, ICOMOS International Day of *Monuments* and Sites, the Night of Museums, the Month of Libraries etc., are becoming increasingly vigorous and public subsidies accorded to them is also becoming increasingly well planned. Public relations activity for these events is highly professional and their influence over the public is growing.

6.2. Trends and figures in cultural participation

The first columns in the table below testify to the shock that the transition of the regime meant for Hungarian society. As late as a decade after the regime change, in 2000, attendance figures remained much below those of the end of the communist era. By the late 2010s all performance indicators showed signs of robust consolidation. The very high theatre and concert attendance figures also reflect a redefinition of these cultural manifestations which statistics – earlier used to communicate mostly or only the institutionalised high culture instances – are trying to follow. However, much of this momentum has been halted by the Covid pandemic.

Table 9: Cinema, theatre, and concert statistics, 1990-2019

Year	1990	2000	2010	2017	2018	2019
*Theatre (No.)	43	52	143	169	207	220
*Theatre (1000 performances)	12	13	19	32	36	36
*Theatre (No. of visits per 1000 persons)	482	393	458	856	873	814
Concerts (No.)	1723	1281	3654	6401	7341	6653
Concerts (1000 visits)	749	426	994	2378	2662	2126
Concerts (No. of visits per 1 000 persons)	72	42	99	243	272	218
Museums (No.)	754	812	647	699	689	700
Museum visits (millions)	14.0	9.9	9.4	9.1	10.1	11.6
Museum (No. of visits per 1 000 persons)	1349	987	946	923	1121	1183
Cinema halls (No.)	1960	564	411	417	421	428
Cinema projections (1 000)	416	372	478	472	479	478
Cinema (No. of visits per 1 000 persons)	3495	1426	1111	1496	1584	1547

Source: Central Statistical Office.

Note: * From 2008, statistics include independent / alternative theatres, too. Only classical music is included under concerts; from 2008, statistics cover a fuller range than previously.

Library lending shows a regular trend over more than a decade, with a monotonous downward slope that

reflects the weakening of the position of printed books.

Table 10: Library statistics, 1980-2019

Year	Number of public libraries	Units lent in public libraries (million)
1980	4 915	40.7
1990	4 179	35.9
2000	3 132	34.5
2010	3 474	26.5
2017	3 450	21.0
2018	3 499	19.8
2019	3 350	19.8

Source: Central Statistical Office.

Table 11: People who participated in or attended a certain cultural activity during the last 12 months, in Hungary (in % of the population)*

Activities heavily subsidised by the state	2012
Theatre	20%
Opera, ballet or dance	10%
Concerts of classical music	26%
Libraries	19%
Museums or galleries	28%
Historical monuments or sites	33%
Activities without large public subsidies	2012
Cinemas	33%
To read books not related to a profession or studies	60%
Cultural programmes on TV or on the radio	57%

Source: Special Eurobarometer 399.

* Nationally representative and broadly available survey results were last produced in 2009 and the last national survey of time use of the population by the Central Statistical Office dates from 2010. The latest report about the cultural behaviour of Hungarians dates from 2012, produced by Eurobarometer.

6.3. Trends and figures in household expenditure

Table 12: Household cultural expenditure by expenditure purpose, in billion HUF and percentages, 2017-2019

Items (Field/Domain)	2017	%	2018	%	2019	%
I. Books and Press	177.5	0.89%	176.5	0.81%	172.5	0.72%
II. Cultural Services	612.5	3.06%	671.5	3.10%	751.5	3.15%
III. Audio-visual equipment and accessories	174.0	0.87%	193.6	0.89%	204.9	0.86%

IV. Other cultural equipment	1.9	0.01%	2.0	0.01%	2.7	0.01%
TOTAL	20 004.2	100%	21 690.5	100%	23 872.1	100%

Source: Central Statistical Office.

6.4. Culture and civil society

The strength of Hungarian amateur cultural activities lies in the good infrastructure and the network of "művelődési házak" (houses of culture, local community centres or socio-cultural institutions). The political control of the communist system cast a shadow on the network, however the multi-purpose cultural institutions have re-gained their position all over the country after the fall of the old regime. These centres give home to cultural associations and amateur groups in all sectors of culture. Their programmes may be labelled as adult education, social policy, or youth policy and the "művelődési házak" have always been considered part of the cultural sector. In most smaller towns and villages, local cultural policy is almost synonymous with maintaining the houses of culture, absorbing the greater part of the cultural budget.

Table 13: Statistics of local community culture (houses of culture), 2020

Type of activity	Frequency
Number of institutions	5 847
Lectures, information events	25 851
Interest groups, workshops	11 615
Workshops	9 300
Exhibitions	9 855
Arts events	24 975
Folklore events	1 662
Entertainment	12 797
Community events	26 112
Training	4 363

Source: Central Statistical Office

Until 2016 the activities of the network of houses of culture were coordinated by the National Institute of Public Culture (*Nemzeti Művelődési Intézet*), a state institute. This function has since been outsourced to a nonprofit limited company of the same name, owned by *Lakitelek Népfőiskola Alapítvány*, a private foundation.

Cultivating folk culture is traditionally an important function of these institutions. A particular offshoot of this is the grass root phenomenon of "dance houses" from the 1970s, still popular today, where traditional peasant dances are being learned and enjoyed as present-day entertainment.

The Hungarian Heritage House is a national institution founded in 2001 and maintained by the Ministry of Human Resources. It serves as a platform for associations and groups preserving folk culture and citizens to meet through numerous performances and interactive, educative programmes. It also provides further education for cultural managers in the field of folk arts.

7. Financing and support

7.1. Public funding

7.1.1. INDICATORS

The first decade of the new millennium brought about economic stagnation, including in cultural funding. This was exacerbated by the global economic crisis. Penury of public funds is not counterbalanced by the sizable influx from the European Structural Funds, which can be used for running costs only if justified as development, e.g., human capacity building, regional (urban, rural) development etc.

Important features of the cultural finances of the current government (after 2010) have been

- centralisation: functions taken over by the state from local governments.
- concentration of resources in selected institution like the *MMA*, lately the Petőfi Literary Museum.
- frequent ad hoc interventions of scales that significantly alter the final balances from the initial annual budgets.
- generous resources for selected projects of iconic value for the current administration.

Indicator 1: About 170 EUR, public cultural expenditure Eurostat – Cofog 08/2, all levels of government, per capita in 2019.

Indicator 2: This corresponds to 1.1% of the GDP (Cofog), or 1.2% (KSH).

Indicator 3: The share of the total public expenditure in 2019 was 2.5%.

In 2019, the population of Hungary was 9.8 million. According to Eurostat/Cofog, total general government expenditure on culture was 1665 million EUR. In 2019, among EU countries, Hungary registered by far the largest ratio to GDP of government expenditure on Cofog 08, 'recreation, culture and religion', over 3% of GDP.

No further detailed information is available on expenditure after 2009. Access to financial data has become even more difficult than before; the website of the State Secretariat for Culture is limited to news, announcements and to the presentation of the structure and main responsibilities. Links lead to the 13 subordinate institutions only.

7.1.2. EXPENDITURE ON GOVERNMENT LEVEL

The years after the millennium showed continued decentralisation. This trend took a sharp turn after 2010 and by 2012 the central government became a stronger single public funder than the regional and local sources cumulatively. A part of the explanation is the restructuring in the museum sector, whereby the state took charge of many regional and municipal institutions.

In the absence of available statistics in the country, one must resort to Eurostat for the following data.

Table 14: Public cultural expenditure by level of government, 2019

Level of government	Total expenditure in in million HUF	Total expenditure in million EUR	% share of total
State (central, federal)	412 011	1 266.6	56%
Regional (provincial, Länder, etc.)	0	0	0
Local (municipal, incl. counties)	202 551	622.7	44%
TOTAL	614 562	1 665.4	100%

Source: Eurostat [Cofog \(cultural services\)](#)

7.1.3. EXPENDITURE PER SECTOR

Due to the scattered character of public management of culture the combined data of the national statistical agency are used.

Cultural centres (houses of culture, community centres) occupy a decisive position, with folk culture constituting an important segment in their activities. The second biggest item is subsidies to theatres.

Table 15: Direct state cultural expenditure by sector, in million HUF and %, 2019

Field/Domain/Sub-domain	Total in million HUF	Total in %
I. Cultural Heritage		
Historical Monuments	70 650	12.4%
Museums & Archives	67 933	12.0%
Libraries	48 018	8.5%
Intangible Heritage / Folk Culture	..	
II. Visual Arts		
Fine Arts / Visual Arts	..	
Photography	..	
Architecture	..	
Design / Applied Arts	..	
III. Performing Arts		
Music and Dance	57 946	10.2%
Theatre, Music Theatre	80 737	14.2%
Multidisciplinary	..	
IV. Books and Press		
Books	4 232	0.7%
Press	..	
V. Audiovisual and Multimedia		
Cinema	..	
Radio & Television	3 121	0.5%
Multimedia	..	
VI. Interdisciplinary		
Socio-culture	121 027	21.3%
Cultural Relations Abroad	..	

Administration	..	
Cultural Education	..	
VII. Not covered by domains I-VI		
Zoos & Natural Parks	59 794	10.5%
Other Entertainment & Culture	54 084	9.5%
TOTAL	567 542	100%

Source: http://www.ksh.hu/stadat_files/ksp/hu/ksp0003.html

7.2. Support programmes

7.2.1. STRATEGIES, PROGRAMMES AND OTHER FORMS OF SUPPORT

Direct payment to individuals is in the focus of cultural support (as compared to financing projects). This includes a large number of fellowships, awards, and monthly allowances (to MMA members).

7.2.2. ARTIST'S FUNDS

The National Cultural Fund is the main public source for financing projects. Some of the calls target individual artists who can apply for grants for creation.

The state-owned Hungarian Creative Arts Nonprofit Ltd. *MANK* administers over 300 studios with flats across the country, 8 recreation resorts and exhibition facilities etc.

The rights collecting agencies (*Artisjus*, *Hungart* etc.) act also as funds that allocate awards and other benefits to artists.

7.2.3. GRANTS, AWARDS, SCHOLARSHIPS

Awards and prizes:

Hungary has traditionally had a complex system of state awards and scholarships. The basic structure dates back to the previous (communist) regime; in addition to the existing list, each minister adds at least one new award. On the last 15 March national holiday, 16 awards were allocated to 63 people (or ensembles in a couple of cases). Most of these bear the name of a renowned Hungarian artist: e.g., the Liszt Award is given to 8 musicians each year. Monetary prizes and various lifetime advantages accompany these awards.

Nearly as many state awards are also given to personalities in the cultural life of the country, from the Knight's Cross to the Kossuth Prize. The latter is given to around 20 people each year, usually including several artists, with a financial bonus that is equivalent to half a months' average income (as stipulated by law).

Five artists are awarded the title of Excellent Artist each year, and ten become Worthy Artists, rewarded with a half and one third of the amount of the Kossuth Prize (all these awards are tax free).

The top distinctions are the Order of St. Stephen (originally founded by Maria Theresa in 1764) as well as the Corvin Chain. This latter is held by twelve people at a time, about half of whom are usually from the cultural

sector. This award was originally founded by Admiral Horthy in 1930, renewed by the first Orbán-government (1998-2002), and again in 2012.

Twelve people can enjoy the benefits of the title of Actor (or Actress, the Hungarian language does not use gender) of the Nation at one time.

Holders of all the above recognitions can be promoted to the Artist of the Nation award. At any one time 70 people over 65 – or in the case of dance and circus art, over the age of 50 – can bear this title, in ten categories:

- 12 literature
- 10 theatre
- 10 visual arts
- 10 music
- 7 crafts & design
- 6 architecture
- 6 film
- 3 folklore
- 3 dance
- 2 photography
- 1 circus

Artists of the Nation receive life annuity, the amount of which is 23 times the current minimum amount of the old-age pension, currently HUF 655 thousand 500.

Grants and scholarships:

The system of one-year (renewable) state grants has been developing and expanding since 1955. Scholarships are available for nearly 100 people, under 35 years, in each of the following fields: fine arts, photography, design, applied arts, art criticism, literature, play writing, composition, musicology, music criticism, jazz and classical musicianship. MMA annually bestows 3-year cultural grants to another 100 people annually with no age restriction. Recipients of these grants get 200 000 HUF a month (ca. €550).

In 2020, the Petőfi Literary Museum launched the Térey Grant, for 45 writers between 35-65 years of age, for up to 5 years, for a monthly grant of around the average salary in the country.

These schemes have been crowned by the regimes operated by MMA, presented in chapter 4.1: the allowances that the members of the Academy and the Artists of the Nation receive.

Artists and cultural operators can also apply for scholarships and grants in the general schemes operated by the Hungarian Scholarship Board Office (*Magyar Ösztöndíj Bizottság*). Senior experts, artists and researchers may seek opportunities to study and work in various countries all over the world through the Hungarian National Eötvös Scholarship (*Magyar Állami Eötvös Ösztöndíj*). There are also scholarships available to artists from the Collegium Hungaricum in Rome.

7.2.4. SUPPORT TO PROFESSIONAL ARTISTS' ASSOCIATIONS OR UNIONS

A most unfortunate manifestation of the dividedness of the society is the doubling of professional associations in major cultural fields like theatre and literature along political lines.

The National Cooperation Fund (*NEA*) distributes financial support to civic organisations upon open calls.

7.3. Private funding

Like everywhere in Europe, the most decisive element of private funding to culture is through citizens' spending on cultural goods and events – see household expenditure in chapter 6.3. Individual citizens' donations and patronage are sporadic and peripheral.

Citizens can express their choice through the 1% scheme, by channelling 1% of their income tax to selected non profit making bodies. Less than 5% is allocated year by year to culture, yet most of this is addressed to groups that are little favoured by public resources. Crowdfunding shows a similar leaning but generates insignificant sums.

Intermediate cases are private investments in culture, especially when they generate impressive values. An exemplary instance is BMC, the Budapest Music Centre, legally a limited company, and financed from public and private sources. A regular exhibitor at the MIDEM in Cannes, BMC mainly focuses on contemporary music and jazz. The government contributed both to the construction and the operation of the institution. The new BMC building in the centre of Budapest has a concert hall, a smaller stage for jazz events, combined with a restaurant, residence area, music archive and offices.

Another case is Orlai Productions, a private theatre enterprise with a respectable scale of performances. Art galleries, concert and festival organisers, and book publishers are almost all private businesses.

Conventional sponsorship is dominated by state companies, with Szerencsejáték Rt (lottery and betting), MVM (electricity), and Hungarian Development Bank the main contributors, run with little or no transparency and with tangible political bias.

Most cultural projects display impressive lists of sponsors' and donors' names, with contributions not statistically detectable as they are mainly in-kind and have not necessarily entered the budgets of the organisations. The tax regulations contain certain incentive measures, but this exerts negligible effect.

A peculiar project is the *Prima Primissima Award*, initiated in 2003 by wealthy entrepreneurs and their companies. It includes ten categories: next to science, sport, or media there are art categories as well. Winners – mostly individuals but also organisations - are selected by juries and popular votes, and get important amounts, up to 20 million HUF.

Expert Authors

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