

# Country Profile

## North Macedonia

Last profile update: September 2021, by Mr. Zlatko Teodisievski

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# 1. Cultural policy system

## 1.1. Objectives, main features and background

The general objectives of cultural policy are provided via the Constitution: civil rights and freedoms, creative autonomy, the obligation to support and develop culture, the right of the different ethnic or national groups to establish institutions for culture and art, the protection of the cultural and historical heritage, etc. During the first decade after gaining independence (1990) there was no general recognisable concept behind the cultural policy system, neither did it follow any particular model. Any developments and changes in the cultural policy "system" were ad hoc and driven by political movement towards decentralisation, multiculturalism etc. The *Law on Culture* (1998) identified some objectives as being of "national interest", such as establishing general conditions for the continuity of culture; creating favourable conditions for outstanding cultural achievements; encouraging cultural diversity; cultural development etc.

Since the introduction of budget financing in the cultural sphere in 1990, financial resources are being allocated to institutions on a yearly basis to cover: salaries and other allowances (i.e. per diems and travelling allowances for permanently employed staff), allowances for annual programmes, investments, heating of buildings, insurance of equipment, buildings, exhibitions, etc.

However, changes took place in the following areas:

- privatisation of the publishing houses (1995);
- equal recognition of public and private entities that work in the field of culture;
- new higher taxes on cultural goods and services; and
- symbolic privileges for donations and sponsorships for cultural activities, etc.

In December 2003, the government passed the *Decision on the Network of National Institutions in the Field of Culture*. It provided the framework within which the network of cultural institutions (national and local) was to be organised and re-allocated responsibilities for culture to the municipalities.

In 2004 for the first time, a National Programme for Culture 2004-2008 was adopted by the Parliament. According to this National Programme, the basic principles of the cultural policy were:

- attainability
- diversity
- openness
- responsibility and
- flexibility

The *Law on Culture* (1998) specifies some cultural objectives as being of "national interest", e.g. establishing general conditions for achieving continuity in culture, creating conditions for outstanding cultural achievements and their protection, encouraging cultural diversity, protecting and developing the cultural identity of different communities, cultural development etc.

On the other hand, according to the National Programme for Culture 2004-2008 (which was the first of its kind in Macedonia), the main cultural policy objectives were:

- decentralisation
- development
- protection and (re)creation of the cultural heritage
- creativity, with special focus on young people
- creating favourable conditions for outstanding cultural achievements and
- cultural management

This National Programme also formulated the following cultural policy priorities:

- decentralisation
- balanced support to cultural heritage and contemporary culture
- cultural management
- promotion of the cultural identity of the communities
- cooperation with NGO's and
- international regional cooperation

However, very little was put into practice.

After the constitution of the new coalition Government (June 2017), in May 2018 a new *National Strategy for Cultural Development in the Republic of Macedonia 2018-2022* was adopted by the Parliament. Its general goals are equal cultural rights for all and freedom and diversity for artistic creation and cultural identities. One of its specific goals is structural reform in the field of culture.

The new *National Strategy for Cultural Development* also defines principles of the strategic development, as follows:

- Democratisation of culture and cultural democracy
- Creativity, pluralism, inclusiveness
- European context
- Liberation in the field of culture etc.

This document also formulates the basic principles of the cultural strategy and the main directions of the reforms, the basic instruments for realisation of the priorities, the necessary reforms in the Ministry of Culture, strategic plans for each cultural domain etc.

The document is followed by an Action plan for implementation of the Strategy, including necessary measures, expected effects and indicators, as well as terms and financial indicators.

The opposition did not support the new National Strategy.

### *Background*

After World War II, the Republic of Macedonia became part of the Yugoslav Federation; therefore, its cultural

policy was subject to the state ideology of building a socialist culture. During that period (1945-1990), cultural policy went through three main development stages:

- a centralist and state-run period which lasted from 1946 until the mid-1950s
- a transitional period that lasted until 1974 and contained some elements of decentralisation and
- from 1975 onwards, a phase of self-management began which defined national and municipal responsibilities for culture including decision making and funding.

After 1945, the role of the government in culture was vastly extended. New institutions were established, programmes were set up to train qualified staff to run these institutions and the culture and the arts were popularised. In the past, Macedonian culture hardly had an opportunity to flourish as its own national culture. It is therefore understandable that there was a certain amount of national and romantic spirit throughout this period.

Following a long period of strict centralism, like other Yugoslav Republics, Macedonia entered a period of self-management in the mid-1970s which offered certain opportunities to develop democratic elements, similar to that of other European countries. Municipal cultural institutions were created and were completely financed by the 31 individual local communities. While promising in theory, steps towards decentralisation became "suffocated" by bureaucratic incompetence, lack of professionalism and a thicket of regulations. In the 1990s, after the country gained independence from Yugoslavia, the cultural policy once again became politically and administratively centralised. The municipalities lost all the competencies they had gained in the field of culture.

There was no explicit cultural policy document which outlined a specific strategy and / or goals of cultural development, and therefore, one could hardly speak of a consistent cultural policy after 1990. The Constitution and the 1998 Law on Culture provided a certain global orientation toward culture including provisions for civil rights and freedoms, minority rights, the obligation of the government to support and develop culture, etc. However, in practice, there is still a combination of the old and new pragmatism and ad hoc temporary solutions.

As early as 1945, Macedonia has been organised as a multicultural country. The Ministry of Culture financed the activities of institutions such as the Theatre of Nationalities (Turkish and Albanian Drama, established in 1947), as well as several cultural associations (amateur and professional), vocal and dance folk groups, etc. Daily newspapers and weekly magazines, monthly children's magazines and radio and TV programmes were available in the respective languages of different cultural communities. Writers, artists, actors, musicians etc. of all nationalities (Albanians, Turks, Serbs, Romans etc.) were members of the same professional associations together with the Macedonians.

After 1990, the once "homogeneous" society started to slowly disintegrate. The process of democratisation has encouraged the emergence of different views and perspectives, also with regard to the culture of minority communities. It has also helped to point out mistakes made in the past. For example, many private publishing companies were established (over 80% of them Albanian) in a very short period of time after 1990 in order to compensate for the lack of books in the languages of different minority groups. Numerous private radio and TV stations were opened and started to broadcast programmes in minority languages (most of them Albanian and Roma). Several new festivals were established to promote the culture of minority groups. Several new associations and NGOs started to work etc. The Ministry of Culture financially supported most of these activities

(except radio and TV).

On the other hand, this approach led to almost complete cultural separation along ethnic lines such as the creation of a foundation for the Association of Albanian Publishers and Association of Albanian Writers. Demands were also made to split up the Theatre of Nationalities into an Albanian Theatre and Turkish Theatre etc.

The ethnic conflict in 2001 (re-)opened certain multicultural questions and the treatment of minority rights (primarily of the Albanian ethnic population) in the field of culture. Following the conflict and the institution of the Ohrid Framework Agreement, the Constitution was amended with some specific provisions for the different cultural communities (see also chapter 4.2.8). Some experts say that "the Ohrid Framework Agreement is a new vision for a Third Republic, which is to be radically different from the first one established with ASNOM (Antifascist Parliament of the Peoples Liberation of Macedonia) in 1944, and the second one, inaugurated with the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia". It means specifically that the constitutional amendments from 2001 establish citizenship in the country for all nationalities or ethnic groups living on its territory and adopting its Constitution – the Macedonian people and parts of Albanian, Turkish, Serbian, Roma, and Bosnian people. In this context, some experts say that Macedonian traditions should be kept up and, consequently, the country should become "the pilot-state of 21st century multiculturalism".

The Republic of North Macedonia (MK) became independent on 8 September 1991. The country became a member of the Council of Europe (CoE) in 1995. It is a candidate for accession to the European Union since 2005. On 26 March 2020, the European Council endorsed the decision to open accession negotiations with North Macedonia. The country joined NATO in March 2020.

## 1.2. Domestic governance system

### 1.2.1. ORGANISATIONAL ORGANIGRAM

Up until the beginning of the 1990s (in the so called "socialistic period"), citizens were both directly and indirectly involved in decision-making on issues considered of local importance including the field of culture. After gaining independence in 1990, the autonomy of municipalities in the field of culture was abolished and the entire competence was transferred to the Ministry of Culture. On July 1, 1991, the Ministry of Culture became responsible for all public cultural institutions, which had been formerly the responsibility of the municipalities. This signified the transition from a completely decentralised system, based on the principles of socialism and self-management, to (at that time) a completely centralised system.

Today, there is a single level of local self-government, consisting of 80 municipalities, including the City of Skopje with 10 municipalities. The City of Skopje is a separate unit of local self-government in which the common needs and interests of citizens are accomplished, which derive from the character of the City of Skopje as the capital of the Republic of Macedonia. The municipalities are legal entities.

The decision-making process is shared between the Ministry of Culture, the government and the parliament. The Ministry of Culture drafts laws and documents for the government, which passes them on to the Parliamentary Committee for Culture for discussion and enactment. The Ministry of Culture appoints directors of national cultural institutions, approves their programme and work, allocates the funds etc.

In 1998, the *Law on Culture* was adopted, setting a framework for cultural policy decision-making and the financing of cultural activities. It includes principles and activities such as freedom of creative work; introduction of a civil concept in culture; an equal position for all public and private entities in the field of culture; introduction of a decentralised system for culture; financing of the national interest in culture by means of open competition etc.

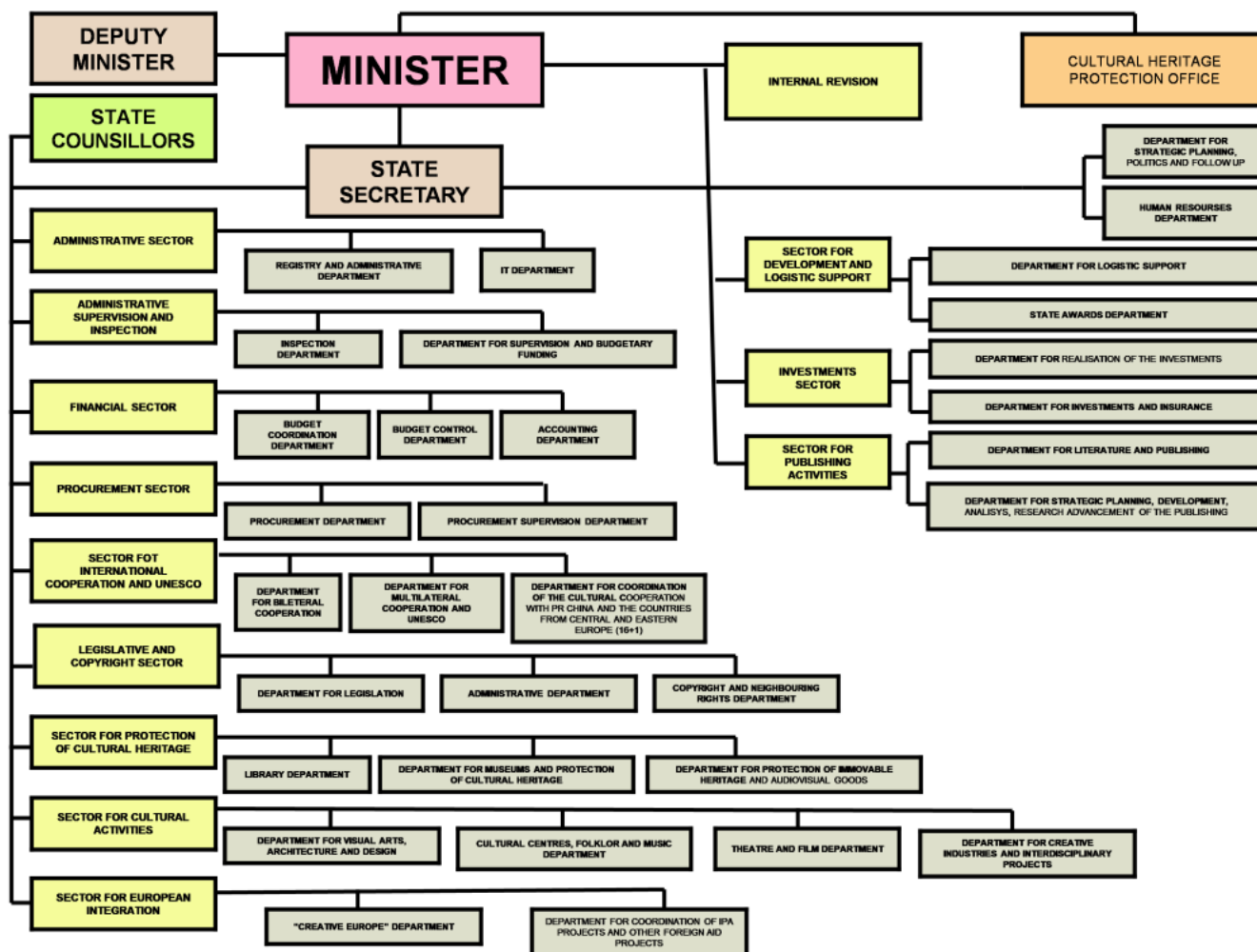
The *Law on Local Self-Government* (2002) gave the municipality's greater independence in the field of culture.

While society has been undergoing tremendous changes (privatisation, restructuring of the economy, unemployment above 30%, social differentiation, etc.), the cultural sector had been left untouched until 2003. At this time, the *Law on Culture* was amended and the *National Programme for Culture 2004 - 2008* was adopted by the Parliament. In December 2003, the government passed the *Decision on the Network of National Institutions in the Field of Culture*, which started the process of decentralisation in the field of culture.

In 2004, the Parliament adopted the *Law on Territorial Organisation* and the *Law on the City of Skopje*.

There have been certain changes to the architecture of the system after the *Ohrid Framework Agreement* (2001). The changes facilitate the participation of minorities in the public administration system and within the cultural policy making processes e.g. via specific councils and working groups at the Ministry of Culture etc. At the beginning of 2003, the Office for Promotion and Advancement of the Cultures of Nationalities was also established at the Ministry of Culture. It provides balanced financial support to cultural projects of all ethnic groups and since 2005 it has begun a gradual implementation of the employment policies stipulated in the *Law on Culture*.





### 1.2.2. NATIONAL AUTHORITIES

The decision-making process in the field of culture is shared between the Ministry of Culture, the government and the parliament. The Ministry of Culture drafts laws and documents for the government, which passes them on to the Parliamentary Committee for Culture for discussion and enactment. The Ministry of Culture appoints directors of national cultural institutions, approves their programmes and work, allocates funds etc.

There hasn't been any change to the architectural system in the past three decades to facilitate or stimulate wider citizen or sectorial engagement.

### 1.2.3. REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

There are no legal regional authorities in North Macedonia.

### 1.2.4. LOCAL AUTHORITIES

After 1990, despite certain laws (*Law on Culture, Law on Local Self Government*), there was no actual division of jurisdiction between national and local levels of government. The Ministry of Culture was in fact responsible for all the cultural institutions in the country (appointing directors of the institutions, providing funds for salaries, running costs and programmes etc.).

In December 2003, the government passed the *Decision on the Network of National Institutions in the Field of*

*Culture*. According to this Decision, only 64 (from the previous 115) institutions gained the status of national institutions completely financed by the Ministry of Culture. All other cultural institutions were considered local and should be financed by the local governments (running costs etc.) but, on the other hand, the salaries were still subsidized from the Ministry of Culture. The local institutions can also apply for annual funding from the Ministry of Culture for programmes and specific projects. Since June 2005 this division of jurisdiction has been put into practice.

Municipalities, within the legal framework, independently regulate and perform activities of local importance determined by law and are responsible for their performance. In the field of culture the municipalities are responsible for institutional and financial support to cultural institutions and projects, preservation of the folklore customs, traditional handicrafts and similar cultural heritage, organisation of cultural events, encouraging various specific forms of artistic work etc.

It is important to stress that in 2012 the City of Skopje, for the first, time adopted a Strategy with an Action Plan for the Development of Culture in the City of Skopje for 2012-2015. The document contained several strategic goals (development of plural and democratic model of cultural policy, transparency, expertise and efficiency in cultural actions; cooperation between all cultural actors; educational programmes, development of creative industries etc.), an action plan with a time frame, methodology and procedures etc. Since then the Skopje administration announces a public call for cultural projects of importance for the City of Skopje.

According to the *Law on the City of Skopje*, the City of Skopje is responsible for:

- institutional and financial support of the cultural institutions and projects of importance for the City of Skopje
- fostering the folklore, tradition, old craftsmanship and similar cultural values
- organising cultural events, encouragement of various specific forms of creativity and
- recognising events and persons of importance for the City of Skopje

The *National Strategy for Cultural Development 2018-2022* foresaw rapid decentralisation in the past several years. However, so far nothing has been done in this direction.

#### 1.2.5. MAIN NON-GOVERNMENTAL ACTORS

Main non-governmental actors are NGO's and artists associations, although their influence is very limited, with a narrow scope and very often under evident political patronage.

Still, the NGOs were very active during the last years of the previous government and were supporting the so called "Colorfull Revolution" (along with several political parties). In June 2012, as an opposition to the former government's cultural policy and its uncritical cultural practices, 14 organisations and NGOs promoted the Association "Core" as a new platform of the independent cultural scene of that time. Throughout its work the Association insisted on transparency by the Ministry of Culture and its annual public competitions, seeking participation of independent cultural representatives in the decision-making process, etc. Since its establishment the "Core" Association represented the essence of the independent cultural scene, constantly promoting the need for democratisation and decentralisation of culture, proving that the independent cultural and artistic scene was one of the vital players, but very underestimated, in Macedonian culture.

However, after the fall of the regime and the establishment of the new democratic coalition government (2017), the “Core” Association and many other pro-government NGO’s started to receive sufficient funds on a yearly basis from the Ministry of Culture and the government itself, thus transforming them into kind of passive and silent state favorites. The latest data shows that 33 NGO’s will receive 19.8 million MKD (325 000 EUR) from the government for their activities in 2021.

#### 1.2.6. TRANSVERSAL CO-OPERATION

Depending on certain questions of wider interest the Ministry of Culture co-operates with a number of other ministries and government agencies, especially with:

- the *Ministry of Finance* on the planning and realisation of the cultural budget, the tax and customs policy;
- the *Ministry of Foreign Affairs* on the co-ordination of international cultural co-operation;
- the *Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning* on the protection of architectural heritage in the process of urban planning;
- the *Ministry of Transport and Communications* on the protection of cultural heritage in connection with permits for the construction of buildings;
- the *Ministry of Internal Affairs* on the prevention of illegal archaeological excavations and illegal trade of cultural goods;
- the *Secretariat for European Integration* on the co-ordination of activities to harmonise Macedonian and European legislation, and
- the *Ministry of Labour and Social Policy* on social and retirement policy in the cultural sector, etc.

### 1.3. Cultural institutions

#### 1.3.1. OVERVIEW OF CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

As mentioned in chapter 1 and 1.2, until 2003 the cultural system was completely centralized. According to the government’s *Decision on the Network of National Institutions in the Field of Culture (2003)*, a division of jurisdiction was made and 63 of 115 cultural institutions gained the status of local institutions. It meant that local authorities were responsible to provide financing of basic costs (salaries, running costs etc.) of these institutions. However, it was never put into practice since the Ministry of culture continued to finance these local institutions through a mechanism called monthly block-donations. This was usually justified due to the very unstable financial situation in most of the municipalities.

This kind of financial dependence of the cultural institutions is one of the weakest points in the Macedonian cultural system. Combined with other modes of legal interventions (appointing directors of the national institutions, the governing boards etc.), it gives the Ministry of culture almost complete control over the cultural institutions. 2021 saw two further examples of bad practice in appointing directors of cultural centres in Strumica and Tetovo where “political” interest prevailed over professional competence.

The *Law on Local Self Government (2002)* also re-allocated some responsibilities to the municipalities in the field of culture, such as: development of local interest in culture; institutional and financial support of cultural institutions and projects, preserving folklore, customs, old crafts and similar cultural values; organising cultural events; and encouragement of various specific forms of art. Municipalities also have the right to appoint

directors of the local institutions and members of the governing boards.

### 1.3.2. DATA ON SELECTED PUBLIC AND PRIVATE CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

Table 20: Cultural institutions financed by public authorities, by domain

| Domain              | Cultural institutions (subdomains)          | Number (Year) | Trend (++ to --) |
|---------------------|---|---------------|------------------|
| Cultural heritage   | Cultural heritage sites (recognised)        | 17 000 (2003) | ++               |
|                     | Museums (organisations)                     | 32 (2017)     | ++               |
|                     | Archives (of public authorities)            | 9             | /                |
| Visual arts         | Public art galleries / exhibition halls     | 69 (2017)     | ++               |
|                     | Art academies (or universities)             | 3 (2017)      | /                |
| Performing arts     | Symphony orchestras                         | 3 (2010)      | ++               |
|                     | Music schools                               | NA            | NA               |
|                     | Music / theatre academies (or universities) | 2 (2018)      | /                |
|                     | Dramatic theatre                            | 19 (2019)     | -                |
|                     | Music theatres, opera houses                | 1 (2020)      | -                |
|                     | Dance and ballet companies                  | 1 (2020)      | /                |
| Books and Libraries | Libraries                                   | 175 (2019)    | +                |
|                     | Books                                       | 1 143 (2019)  | ++               |
| Audiovisual         | Broadcasting organisations                  | 105 (2019)    | -                |
| Interdisciplinary   | Socio-cultural centres / cultural houses    | 35 (2010)     | NA               |

\* There is no data available for private institutions.

Source: State Statistical Office.

### 1.3.3. PUBLIC CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS: TRENDS AND STRATEGIES

Public cultural institutions are usually founded by the state and very rarely by municipalities. So far there are no changes in the financing of cultural institutions: in general, both types (national and local) institutions are financed by the state (Ministry of Culture).

In the past several years the number of institutions that are managing to apply for funding through various programmes of the European Union (e.g. IPA, Creative Europe, books translation etc.) have increased.

There is also a trend for private-public initiative between public cultural institutions and private ones, especially on the basis of cooperation of public cultural institutions with non-governmental cultural organisations or other actors from civil society on certain projects.

Except for the *National Strategy for Cultural Development 2018-2022*, there are no other official strategies concerning the public cultural institutions. As a matter of fact, even those formulated in the *National Strategy* (rapid decentralisation, reforms and depoliticisation in the cultural institutions, their revitalisation etc.) are completely left aside in the current trends in Macedonian culture.

## 1.4. International cooperation

### 1.4.1. PUBLIC ACTORS AND CULTURAL DIPLOMACY

The Ministry of Culture (in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) is the main body responsible for international, bilateral and multilateral cultural co-operation, which is realised through international conventions, other international agreements, bilateral agreements and programmes for co-operation. Bilateral cultural co-operation agreements include educational and scientific programmes as part of framework agreements that are signed for 1-3 years. Therefore, these agreements are the major instrument in international cooperation. Other instruments such as cooperation treaties, co-production agreements or state guarantees are also in use. So far, the Ministry of Culture has signed bilateral agreements for cultural cooperation with over 50 countries.

On the other hand, local authorities are also independent in planning and effectuating international cultural cooperation. At the same time, a significant part of international cultural co-operation is realised through direct co-operation between institutions and individuals and is frequently endorsed and financed by the Ministry of Culture.

The financial support for international cultural co-operation varies each year, depending on the annual budget of the Ministry of Culture and the programmed activities. However, the usual estimation is 2-3% of the annual budget of the Ministry for the programmes and activities in the field of international cultural co-operation.

In 2006 the government announced the idea of appointing recognised artists, writers, and musicians etc., as cultural ambassadors abroad. Following this Decision, 10 cultural ambassadors were appointed during the previous government. They did not have full diplomatic status. However, due to lack of actual results and verified benefits, the Ministry of Culture cancelled this practice in 2017.

North Macedonia has been a member of UNESCO since 28 June 1993. It ratified various conventions including the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2007) and the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2006). Between 2016 and 2017, UNESCO's Participation Programme approved 5 projects that MK participated in, including 1 regional project. Lake Ohrid region is a World Heritage Site since 1979. Bitola became a UNESCO Creative City of Film in 2015 (part of UNESCO Creative Cities Network). The country is included in the UNESCO/EU action to Fight Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Property.

### 1.4.2. EUROPEAN / INTERNATIONAL ACTORS AND PROGRAMMES

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for implementing and monitoring all the international (bilateral or multilateral) agreements and conventions. The Ministry of Culture (with UNESCO National Commission) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, depending on the field of interest, are responsible for implementing and monitoring the conventions in the field of culture, such as the *UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions*. The Convention was ratified on May 22, 2007. In the past several years UNESCO has supported 15 projects in the fields of culture, education, science etc., and 8 grants for young researchers, professionals in the protection of cultural heritage etc.

Since January 2008, North Macedonia (as a candidate for full EU membership) has access to European Union funds for culture. A Culture Contact Point was established (as part of the Ministry's Department for EU Integration), to inform and advise Macedonian institutions on accessing these funds.

The European Union (EU) has allocated EUR 57.7 million for North Macedonia to participate in 12 EU programmes so far, including Erasmus+, Creative Europe, the programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (COSME), Horizon 2020, Customs 2020, Fiscalis 2020 and Europe for Citizens. North Macedonia is trying to make the most of EU funding to support its CCS: its cultural operators have been involved in 79 Creative Europe projects between 2014 and 2020 (as project coordinator for 45 of these projects).

Through the EU's Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA), DG NEAR of the European Commission is funding the Creative Europe Culture Sub-programme – Western Balkans Cooperation Projects. The programme is managed by DG EAC with a total budget estimated at EUR 5 million. Selection results on the first call were announced on 30 July 2020. The 13 winning applications include 12 cultural organisations from North Macedonia (out of a total of 77 beneficiary organisations).

In 2018, the Centre for Cultural Cooperation of the "Initiative 16+1" was open for cultural cooperation with 16 South-East European countries and PR China.

In 2018, the Minister of Culture signed the Davos Declaration 2018 "Towards a high-quality *Baucultur* for Europe".

There are Macedonian cultural centres in Sofia (Bulgaria), New York (USA), Istanbul (Turkey) and Tirana (Albania) that play a certain role in international cooperation.

There are no exact strict government programmes to support trans-national intercultural dialogue, but certain programmes are channelled via the Ministry of Culture or intergovernmental organisations. The Ministry of Culture supports specific trans-national activities for young people or youth groups, through funds available for travel grants, language or cross-cultural training courses.

The *Treaty for good neighbourly relations* (2017) with Bulgaria and the *Final Agreement for the Settlement of the Name Issue* (2018) with Greece are a serious step towards international cultural dialogue and co-operation.

The *Final Agreement for Settlement of the Name Issue* in article 14.8 points out that "The Parties shall support the broadening of tourist exchanges, and the development of their cooperation in the fields of alternative tourism, including cultural, religious, educational, medical, and athletic tourism and shall cooperate in improving and promoting business and tourist travel between them".

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

Direct professional cooperation of the cultural institutions is also mostly financed by the Ministry of Culture and it represents the main international co-operation in recent years. Through the Annual competition for financing the national interest in culture, the Ministry of Culture supports international projects of national and local institutions, NGO's, associations and artists in promoting cultural cooperation with European countries and other parts of the world.

In the past decade there was a notable trend for a lot of cultural NGOs as well as professional associations of artists and cultural workers to establish international connections and to participate in numerous international projects and different types of professional cooperation. Almost all professional associations of artists and cultural workers are members of international professional organisations and/or international cultural networks. The interest of cultural operators and artists in participating in various international networks continues to be ever growing and more visible.

## 2. Current cultural affairs

### 2.1. Key developments

After the Parliamentary elections in 2016 the new coalition Government (June 2017) announced its main cultural priorities (freedom of creativity, equality, universal good) and most important principles (accessibility, inclusiveness, cultural democracy, new models of financing culture etc.) and the necessary reforms in the field of culture (as well as the reforms of the whole system) became main cultural policy issues. Most of the issues were elaborated in the new National Strategy for Cultural Development. During 2017/2018 the Ministry of Culture had started with some of the announced reforms establishing 20 working groups for revising the most important issues in the global cultural policy (decentralisation, new laws in the field of culture, transformation of the Ministry of Culture, international cooperation, cultural industries, protection of the cultural heritage, museums, “Skopje 2014” etc.). However, in 2018, although most of the working groups delivered their analysis and suggestions, the expected continuance with the reforms had suddenly stopped. Since 2018 the word “reforms in culture” is barely in use in the everyday communication of the Ministry of Culture or the Government. Despite the often public questions on this issue, there was no clear explanation about this from the Ministry of Culture or the Government.

Although the key issue of the National Strategy, the new Government (September 2020) also does not mention the reforms in the field of culture, setting some new “priorities” such as: protection of cultural heritage, international cooperation, youth and culture etc.

In December 2020 an online Peer Review on the cultural policy of North Macedonia was exercised by the Council of Europe expert group. The following main challenges have been identified:

- the need to reform public administration to improve transparency on management and spending,
- to improve data collection on the culture and creative sectors,
- to digitize procedure,
- to operationalize policy vision,
- to reward merit,
- to value professional expertise over political appointments.

### 2.2. Cultural rights and ethics

The *Constitution* guarantees the following rights related to culture:

- civil rights and freedoms;
- creative autonomy;
- the obligation to support and develop culture;
- the right of the different ethnic or national groups to establish institutions for culture and art;
- the protection of the cultural and historical heritage; and
- copyright protection.

Issues related to cultural rights are mainly viewed in the focus of the cultural rights of national minorities. The



Ministry of Culture supports various programs of national minorities through the distribution of grants in art and cultural fields.

## 2.3. Role of artists and cultural professionals

The artistic and cultural creativity is supported on the state level in several ways:

- direct budgetary support for projects of national interest through annual public competition in all cultural fields, regardless of the status of the institution or the artist;
- direct budgetary contributions for independent artists (retirement, health insurance etc.);
- indirect support through tax and customs deductions and
- ad hoc support from the reserve budgetary funds for projects outside the competition procedure.

Through public competition, the Ministry of Culture also supports the professional development of talented young artists and professionals in the area of film, theatre, music, dance, literature, visual arts, and protection of movable and immovable cultural heritage. The priority is given to studies that do not exist within the Macedonian educational system.

Other examples of direct support include: an annual open competition for artists to spend time at Cité International des Arts in Paris, and several state awards ("11th October" Award which is the most important national award; "St. Kliment Award" etc.) given to artists (on public competition) as a recognition for their life-time achievement.

The Ministry of Culture provides funding for the annual awards given by professional artists association to their members for special achievements.

In 2008, the Ministry of Culture announced the introduction of a new category / position of "national artist". The title was reserved for the most significant artists as a recognition of their contribution to the development and popularisation of Macedonian art and culture. The *Law on National Artists* was approved in 2011. The title was awarded by the President of the Republic, based on the proposal from the Minister of Culture. The title provided a lifelong monthly payment of 1 000 EUR and a monograph of his / her work to be published by the Ministry of Culture. Another form of direct support to artists was the so called "national pension", which was awarded to significant artists and experts in the protection of cultural heritage. The artists and experts who were awarded this lifelong national pension actually got the difference between their pension and the highest pension in the country.

However, having in mind the actual practice within the last decade, the new Government determined that these two new categories were a kind of political corruption to the artists and cultural workers enforced by the former government. The Ministry of Culture consequently annulled the laws in 2018.

Until the end of 2000, professional artists associations were treated as national institutions and were completely financed (salaries, running costs, annual programmes etc.) by the Ministry of Culture. Pursuant to the government policy of reducing the number of employees in public administration and in accordance with the *Law on Citizens' Associations and Foundations*, professional artists associations are now treated as civil associations i.e. only their projects are funded.

Through an open yearly competition, the Ministry of Culture provides international membership fee costs for the professional associations (ICOM, ICOMOS, AICA, FREEPRESCI, BLUE SHIELD etc.).

(See also chapter 4.1.3)

## 2.4. Digital policy and developments

The UN research “E-Government Survey 2014: E-Government for the Future We Want” (2014) stated that Macedonia was in last place in all segments of the analysis: the lowest index on e-government in the region, the lowest percentage of electronic services for the population, the lowest percentage of citizen’s contribution in the decisions of the local and central authorities etc.

That is why one of the goals of the new democratic Government (2017) was to develop the IT sector and to foster communication between citizens and the state administration. One of the priorities is to create electronic registers for all Government electronic services for citizens. The Government will also prepare a long-term national strategy for development of the informatics society, it will support the formation of research units in the business sector for efficient transfer of modern technologies and it will reduce the tax on IT technology to 5% etc.

However, it is still very difficult to communicate with the Government and the ministries through e-mail. The Ministry of culture does not support digital applications in its Annual contest (although the City of Skopje does), etc.

On the other hand, according to the data of the State Statistical Office, in the first quarter of 2020, 79.9% of households had access to the Internet. The participation of households with broadband connection in the total number of households was 87.8% in 2020. In the first quarter of 2020, 81.4% of the total population aged 15-74 used the Internet, and 70.9% used the Internet every day or almost every day.

## 2.5. Cultural and social diversity

### 2.5.1. NATIONAL / INTERNATIONAL INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

Officially recognised ethnic (cultural) minorities are those mentioned in the Preamble of the Constitution: Albanians, Turks, Roma, Serbs, Bosnians and Vlachs. According to the latest census of 2002, the total population was 2 022 547, of which 64.18% are Macedonians (1 297 981). The rest of the population is made up of:

Table 2: Share of ethnic minority groups, 2002

| Ethnic minority groups | Total number | % share of total population |
|------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------|
| Albanians              | 509 083      | 25.17                       |
| Turks                  | 77 959       | 3.85                        |
| Romans                 | 53 879       | 2.66                        |
| Serbs                  | 35 939       | 1.78                        |

|          |        |      |
|----------|--------|------|
| Bosnians | 17 018 | 0.84 |
| Vlachs   | 9 695  | 0.48 |
| Others   | 20 993 | 1.04 |

Source: State Statistical Office, Census of Population, Households and Dwellings in the Republic of Macedonia, 2002

In 2006, there was an official demand made by Croatia to recognise the Croatian ethnic minority as a Constitutional minority, but this demand was not accepted by the Macedonian government.

These minority groups have the constitutional right to freely express, nurture and develop their own cultural, religious, and linguistic identity and national features. The Ministry of Culture pays great attention to this, particularly in the decision-making process about projects submitted in open competitions, and in the creation of the yearly cultural programmes.

Following the signing of the *Ohrid Framework Agreement* of August 13th 2001, the following amendments were made to the Constitution for the different cultural communities:

The new Census that started in October 2011 was interrupted and then completely cancelled after only 4 days. It started with the resignation of the president of the State Census Commission, and very soon with the resignation of the whole Commission because of some differences in the legislative interpretation and serious disagreements about the methodology for conducting the census in the field (especially in areas with ethnically mixed populations), which would have resulted in incorrect data. Government officials stated that there were technical problems and a lack of preparedness for this large statistical operation to be finished in 15 days. It was planned that a new Census would be organised within 6 to 12 months, but it never happened.

The new Government (2017) stated that the new Census would be organised in 2020 but it was postponed until September 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

What concerns other social groups and communities, unofficially, is that there is a gay community that consists of nearly 30-40 000 people, but it has never been officially recognised. On the other hand, the gay community has recently been the subject of vigorous public polemics over whether people with "different" sexual orientation should be included in the new *Law on Protection and Prevention of Discrimination*, the *Law on Family* etc. The former government refused to mention this group in the laws.

The *Law on Protection and Prevention of Discrimination* was adopted in January 2011, without explicitly mentioning sexual orientation. The U.S. State Department stated in its 2012 report that in Macedonia there is social prejudice towards members of the LGBT community, who were exposed to harassment and demeaning language in the media.

In 2013 the Network for Prevention of Discrimination (founded in 2010 by a number of NGO's and citizens' associations) published an open letter to members of the Parliament asking them to demand additional detailed information on the 2013 *Report of the Parliamentary Commission for Prevention of Discrimination*. The open letter said that the report had no educational points, did not establish causes for certain kinds of discrimination, nor affirmed measures to overcome the situation.

In September 2013 the Macedonian ruling party at that time in the Parliament raised the question of changing the Constitution in order to re-define marriage as a union between a man and a woman and that a child can be adopted only in that kind of marriage. The Parliament did not support the initiative. But the new Parliament (April 2014), without the participation of the opposition parties, supported the initiative to change the *Constitution* not only in redefining marriage but also on several other points.

North Macedonia is a multi-cultural, multi-confessional and multi-linguistic country where intercultural dialogue is one of the most important issues. In fact, the whole political system is designed on these bases. In strictly cultural terms, the main authority responsible for programmes and policies addressing the issue of intercultural dialogue at national level is the Ministry of Culture. The Ministry has also established an Office for the Promotion and Advancement of the Cultures of Nationalities. On the governmental level there is an Office of National Coordinator for Inclusion and Intercultural Dialogue.

The main policy document identifying intercultural (interethnic) dialogue as an objective or priority of the government is the *Ohrid Framework Agreement* from 2001. In that context, the general intercultural dialogue has been fostered, especially after the *Ohrid Framework Agreement*. ICD has been on the agenda of all the ministries and government agencies, especially the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Secretariat for European Affairs, the Agency for Youth and Sport, the Agency for the Rights of the Communities etc. ICD is an important part of several national strategies, including the *National Strategy for one society and inclusion* (2019), *National Strategy for Cultural Development 2018-2022* (2018) etc.

In 2003, the Parliament established the Committee on the Political System and Ethnic Relations. It consisted of 19 members, including seven seats reserved for ethnic Macedonian legislators and seven for ethnic Albanian deputies. The Serbian, Vlach, Turk, Romany, and Bosnian minorities have one member each. The formation of the committee was part of the implementation of the *Ohrid Agreement*.

After the 2020 Parliamentary elections, the new Government established a new Ministry of Political System and Inter-Community Relations.

The NGO sector is a big promoter of intercultural dialogue, especially the Foundation Open Society Institute Macedonia which has several programmes for intercultural dialogue.

Religious values are also a topical issue of intercultural dialogue, especially religious education that was introduced for the first time (since the Second World War) in elementary schools in 2008. However, religious education was voluntary and children could choose between two subjects: religious education or history of religion. The religious communities (Orthodox, Islamic etc.) were in favour of this initiative. There was a kind of public debate about this development regarding the way it should be organised, who should be allowed to teach it, etc. Religious symbols were also a relevant issue. The main effect of such issues has been a growing awareness of the need for ICD.

On the other hand, after the introduction of religious education in elementary schools in 2008, the Constitutional Court in 2009, acting on a citizen's submission, ruled against religious education in elementary schools.

## 2.5.2. DIVERSITY EDUCATION

The education of artists and experts takes place within the framework of the secondary and higher education institutions in the country, that fall within the departmental competence of the Ministry of Education and Science. The Ministry of Culture does not participate in the preparation of the curricula and in the establishment of the network of educational institutions. However, within the framework of inter-departmental co-operation, it can influence educational policy, from the point of view of culture.

The *Strategy for Education 2018-2022* as a strategy document in the educational field is mainly directed at the:

- Quality of education and its relevance to the development priorities of society;
- Development of the generic and key competences of the students as critical subjects and active and relevant participants in social life;
- Infrastructure of the educational system;
- Human resources capacities;
- Autonomy of the educational institutions, especially universities, as well as the subjects of the educational process, etc.

On the other hand, cultural education is one of the key points of the National Strategy for Cultural Development 2018-2022. It projects closer cooperation and coordination between the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Education and Science on the student quotas for certain important cultural study programmes, specific student programmes for underdeveloped professions (for example studies on conservation and restoration) in the cultural field etc.

In order to make up for a deficiency of artists and experts in the field of culture, the Ministry of Culture awards scholarships for post-graduate professional development of young and talented artists, for regular academic education, as well as for studies abroad in fields where there are a lack of possibilities to undertake the same programmes in North Macedonia.

(See also chapter 2.5.1. about religious education)

## 2.5.3. MEDIA PLURALISM AND CONTENT DIVERSITY

There has been a long and promising debate about the situation in the media in North Macedonia after the fall of the regime in 2017, about media legislation, media pluralism and diversity that should reflect the transformation of media and media policies. However, very little has been done so far, especially in relation to Macedonian Radio Television (as a public broadcasting enterprise), in media policy etc.

According to the State Statistical Office (No. 2.1.20.19), in 2019 there were 107 business entities performing broadcasting activities in the Republic of Macedonia, of which 62 transmitted radio programmes and 43 transmitted television programmes. Of the total number of business entities that transmitted radio programmes, one is a public broadcasting enterprise (Macedonian Radio Television), 57 are commercial broadcasting companies, and 4 are non-profit broadcasting institutions. According to the data, the public radio broadcasting enterprise broadcast a total of 38 015 hours of radio programmes, of which most, or 58.4 %, was music programmes. The commercial radio broadcasting companies broadcast a total of 499 320 hours of radio programmes, of which most, or 63.0%, was also music programmes. Of the total number of business entities

that transmitted television programmes, one is a public broadcasting enterprise and 42 are commercial broadcasting companies. The public television broadcasting enterprise broadcast a total of 23 941 hours of television programmes, of which most, or 27.2%, was documentary and educational programmes. The commercial television broadcasting companies broadcast a total of 357 684 hours of television programmes, of which most, or 23.2%, was fixture programmes.

Macedonian Radio and Television as a public broadcasting service broadcasts TV programmes in seven languages (Macedonian, Albanian, Turkish, Roma, Serb, Bosnian and Vlach) and radio programmes in nine languages (Macedonian, Albanian, Turkish, Roma, Serb, Bosnian, Vlach, Greek and Bulgarian). According to the *Law on Audio and Audio-visual Media Services* the share of domestic versus imported programs for business entities is 50:50% and for Macedonian Television is 60:40%.

The Public Broadcasting Service tax was 190 MKD (around 3.1 EUR). It was cancelled by Government decision in 2017. Since then, the Government finances Public Broadcasting Service.

By the adoption of the Law on Audio and Audio-visual Media Services, the Broadcasting Council was transformed into the Agency for Audio and Audio-visual Media Services. The main bodies of the Agency are the Council and the Director of the Agency. The Council consists of seven members, who elect the President and Deputy President among the members. The members of the Council are appointed by the Parliament.

The Ministry of Culture has no responsibility over the media.

#### 2.5.4. LANGUAGE

The official language is Macedonian. In 1998, the *Law on the Use of the Macedonian Language* was passed. A breakdown of cultural communities with other languages is provided in 2.5 (Table 1).

In this context, it should be mentioned that for almost three years (2006-2009) the Committee for Culture in the Parliament was not working, waiting for the final decision whether the *Rules of Procedure* would change and if the Parliamentary committees could be conducted in the Albanian language as well. The Parliament representatives from the Albanian political parties did not want to take part in this Committee until the "language question" in the Rules of Procedure was solved. In August 2008, the Parliament passed the new Rules of Procedure and the new *Law on the Use of the Albanian language*. According to this document, starting from 2009, the Parliamentary committees can be conducted in the Albanian language as well.

In January 2018, after a long and burning public debate, the Parliament passed the new *Law on the Use of Languages*. The Law stipulates the use of the Albanian language on national and local level. Along with this Law, the Government submitted amendments to the *Law on Identity Cards* in order to expand the possibilities that members of the communities would have in the process of issuing the ID cards. It proposes that for communities who speak a language other than Macedonian (spoken by at least 20% of citizens and who also use its alphabet), then the ID cards can be printed in the language and alphabet spoken by these communities.

#### 2.5.5. GENDER

The 2012 *Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men* replaced the previous 2006 law. It contains the same definition of discrimination provided in the previous law, clarifies the reporting responsibilities of all public

actors and obliges public authorities to adopt gender responsive strategic plans and budgets. It regulates the basic principles and special measures for equal opportunities for women and men, the responsibilities, tasks and obligations of the public entities etc. The main objective of the Law is to promote the principle of establishing equal opportunities for women and men in the political, economic, social, educational and other fields of social life. Other implemented legal measures in this direction are: the 2009 amendments to the *Law on the Ombudsman* which required the Office of the Ombudsman to establish a unit for "protection of citizens from discrimination"; the 2012 amendments to the Law on Labour Relations which expressly prohibit discrimination against women workers during pregnancy, maternity and parenthood regardless of the type or duration of work and the 2010 *Law on Free Legal Aid* which assists women without financial resources to access justice. In 2012 the *Labour Law* was amended to avoid employment discrimination, prohibiting employers to ask for a pregnancy test in the process of recruitment and / or to dismiss an employee because of pregnancy.

A report on gender equality in the Ministry of Culture was published in 2012. According to the report, out of 146 public servants, 83 were women and 63 were men. 31 women and 12 men hold management positions. There is no similar data for the cultural institutions.

In order to have better data on gender participation, in the application form for the 2021 Annual contest, the Ministry of Culture included a question on the number of men and women included in the project.

#### 2.5.6. DISABILITY

In 2018 the Government established a Coordinative body for implementation of the UN Convention on the rights of people with disabilities. The Coordinative body has 15 members (2 from the Prime Minister's Office, members from 11 ministries, a member from the National Council of organisations of people with disabilities etc.). It is supposed to be a kind of national mechanism for implementation of this Convention and to cooperate with representative associations of people with disabilities.

The new *Law on Social Protection* (May 2019) improves the rights of people with disabilities (better services in the local communities, personal assistance and home care, social inclusion etc.).

However, there are no general initiatives for inclusion of people with disabilities in the field of culture. Some institutions incidentally carry out programmes that encourage inclusion and/or artistic creation of people with disabilities but they are not organised efforts. One of the initiatives of the previous mentioned Coordinative body in the field of culture was to include as standard the use of sign language in some performances of the "Comedy Theatre".

## 2.6. Culture and social inclusion

One of the key targets for the new Government in social politics is to bring the poverty rate down to below 16% (the poverty rate was 21.9% in 2016), with a special emphasis on children poverty.

Other future priority social measures and activities are:

- The concept "Local community cares" (for people with disabilities);
- The family care;

- Functional institutional network for the social protection of older people, centres for disabled people, day care centres etc.;
- Legal changes in the use of social apartments (for families with low incomes, young couples, disabled persons etc.);
- Increase of 50% in the financial help for disabled people during the Government's mandate, etc.

There are special measures and activities for children and young people as well.

There are no governmental measures in the field of culture but special measures for culture inclusion were provided via the new *National Strategy for Cultural Development 2018-2022* (cultural rights, freedom and multiplicity of cultural identity, accessibility in cultural processes, inclusion of marginalized groups etc.) but so far nothing has been put into practice.

## 2.7. Societal impact of arts

It is still very difficult to talk about a conceptual and practical progress that foresees culture as an important social factor or about plans or a vision that fully incorporate culture as one of the key elements for development, welfare and social impact. It remains a kind of challenge for the future in North Macedonia. Even the Strategic plan of the Ministry of Culture 2021-2023 does not mention culture and social inclusion / impact in its priorities.

## 2.8. Cultural sustainability

Cultural sustainability as a goal in itself or a strategy to progress towards sustainable development goals is as yet a grey zone not only in Macedonian cultural policy but also in governmental policies as well. There are no initiatives at national and local levels that consider culture as a possible pillar for any strategy of sustainable development.

Although the National Strategy for Cultural Development 2018-2022, (in the parts *Vision* and *Mission*), foresees dynamic and sustainable cultural development and insists on promoting cultural policy as a basis for formulation of new economic, political and social capital, so far nothing has changed.

## 2.9. Other main cultural policy issues

One of the constant burning cultural issues since 2009 is the controversial (and in many parts illegal) government project "Skopje 2014". It was enforced by the previous regime (2006-2017) without consulting the Parliament or the expert community. The so called project completely reshaped the (modernistic) city centre of Skopje with antique-looking monuments (including a giant 30 metre high monument to Alexander the Great, his father Phillip II and mother Olympia, other local / national political figures etc.), public buildings were re-shaped in pseudo-baroque and neo-classic style, a triumphal arch was built etc. Moreover, the so called "Wiretapping" scandal (2016/2017), involving the Prime Minister and other government ministers (especially the Minister of Culture), unveiled numerous irregularities and arbitrariness around this notorious project.

Although it was estimated to cost around 80 million EUR, even today the entire cost of the project is still



unknown. Estimations exceed 800 million EUR but no government institution is dealing with it.

The so called “Project Skopje 2014” was one of the cornerstones of the opposition critics at that time and was a strong argument against the criminal and corrupted regime. The promise that the new democratic government will consequently deal with this “project” gained support from most Skopje citizens. In 2017, the new Minister of Culture formed a working group to analyse all aspects of the whole project and to suggest solutions for each part of it. Although the working group managed to deliver 15 suggestions for the major monuments none of the suggested measures were accepted by the Government. The working group was gradually suspended after only a year and a half without finishing its job.

## 3. Cultural and creative sectors

### 3.1. Heritage

There are approximately 11 200 buildings registered as part of the immovable cultural heritage (4 260 archaeological sites; 1 726 churches and monasteries with over 150 000 square metres of mural fresco paintings; etc.) and 500 000 museum pieces. Institutional responsibility for cultural heritage (by types) rests with the institutes for the protection of cultural monuments (immovable cultural heritage) and museums, libraries and the national cinémathèque (moveable cultural heritage). The process of revalorisation of the cultural heritage is in process for several years.

The first institution for protection of cultural heritage was founded in 1949 in Skopje as a central institute for protection of cultural monuments and natural rarities (today known as the National Conservation Centre).

Until 2004 there were 7 institutes (together with public museums, as one legal entity) responsible for the protection of immovable cultural heritage (1 national and 6 with regional scope), including conservation and restoration. These institutes were legally obliged to register the monuments designated as cultural heritage. As a result of their work, 11 200 immovable objects from different periods have been recorded. The period of time required to complete the validation process is quite slow in comparison to the speed at which objects are recorded (proportion 10:1). In the period 1991-1997 the share of the protection of the immovable cultural heritage in the total budget for culture ranged from 8 to 13%. In contrast to this, in the period until 1991, the percentage of protection funds used to be as much as 35%. However, as the Minister of Culture recently has stated, only 17.5% of the immovable heritage have been revalorised.

There are 3 national parks: Galichica (since 1958), Mavrovo (1949) and Pelister (1948).

In 2004, the Ministry of Culture established a Directorate for Protection of Cultural Heritage Office (DPCH) as a constituent part of the Ministry (with 66 employees), operating as a legal entity.

Organisational structure DPCH:

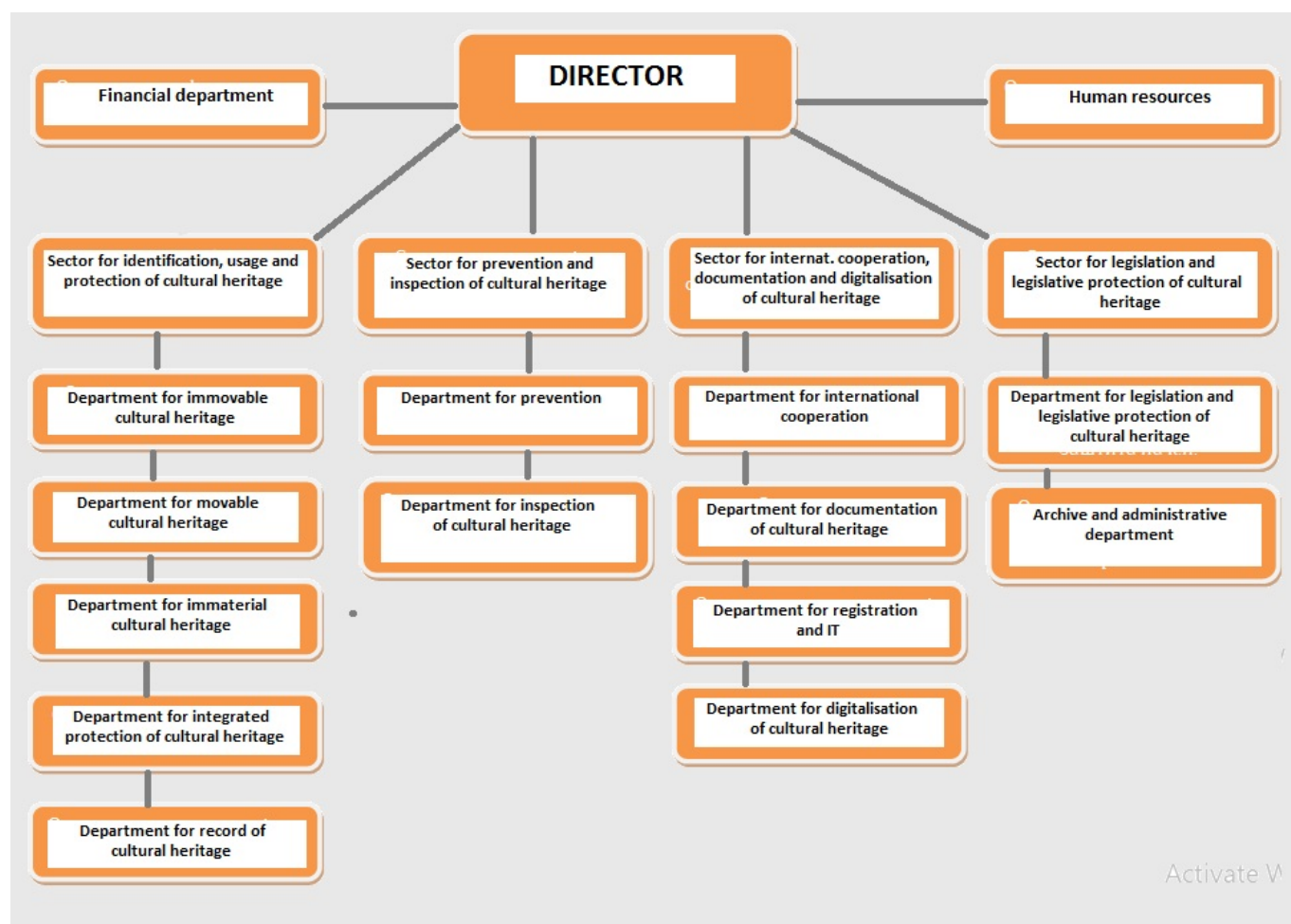


Table 3: DPCH – 2016 - 2018 budget

| Cultural Heritage Protection Office                    | 2016        | 2017        | 2018        |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Salaries, goods, services, transfers, capital expenses | 45 552 000  | 48 066 000  | 49 550 000  |
| Activities   | 155 587 000 | 149 294 000 | 133 200 000 |
| Total in MKD   | 201 139 000 | 197 306 000 | 191 550 000 |
| Total in EUR   | 3 297 360   | 3 234 524   | 3 140 163   |

Source: Ministry of Finance, Budget 2016/17/18

Cultural heritage protection and archaeological excavations have been the government's top priority from 2006 onwards. The budget for archaeological excavations, especially in 2006-2009, tripled compared to the years before, but is declining since then.

There is special legislation on the protection of archival material and its handling, librarianship, and the preservation of films and film material of historic, artistic and other cultural significance.

In July 2013, the director of the DPCH and the chief inspector for protection of cultural heritage were arrested as part of the so called "Falanga 2" process for issuing permits for illegal archaeological excavations and facilitating illicit trafficking. In June 2014 the director was sentenced to three years in prison, and the chief inspector to five years.

In 2013, the DPCH established a National Information System for Cultural Heritage. This portal provided an overview of the North Macedonian immovable, movable and intangible cultural heritage. Its purpose was to

present data on heritage to the general public.

In 2017, the National Council for Cultural Heritage was constituted within the Ministry of Culture. It consists of 11 members and the president of the Council is the Minister of Culture.

Several burning major issues for cultural heritage policies have been present for years:

- new strategy for protection of cultural heritage and a new law on protection of the cultural heritage;
- new law on protection of cultural heritage;
- revision of the National Registry of Cultural Heritage (especially for the illegal entries made during the notorious project “Skopje 2014”);
- revalorisation of the cultural heritage;
- addressing illegal archaeological excavations and illicit trafficking of cultural heritage, etc.

These issues, and many more, were also underlined in the Analysis prepared by the Working group for the protection of cultural heritage in 2017/2018 but none of it has been put into practice.

A draft of a new National Strategy for Protection of Cultural Heritage (2021-2025) is under public debate.

For the first time, in the 2021 budget for protection of cultural heritage there is a fund for protection of cultural heritage in danger.

### *Museums*

Museums are mainly responsible for the protection of moveable cultural heritage. To a certain extent, the National and University Library (for medieval manuscripts) and the National Cinémathèque (for films) also play a role.

Table 4: Museums in Macedonia, 2018

|                   |    |
|-------------------|----|
| Museums           |    |
| Public (national) | 22 |
| Public (local)    | 11 |
| Total             | 33 |

Source: Ministry of Culture

There is no official museum policy document yet, but the key issues and priorities have been stated in the *National Strategy for Cultural Development 2018-2022*:

- necessary changes to the Law on Museums,
- review of the status (national and local) of museums and decentralisation of the museum network,
- analysis of the space conditions in the major museums,
- analysis of the permanent displays, etc.

However, so far nothing has been put into practice.

There is no national museum association or formal network, but some of the museums are members of ICOM.

It is important to underline that in the period 2008-2014 several new museums have been opened: *Museum on Water* in Ohrid, *Memorial House of Mother Theresa*, *Museum of Macedonian Struggle* (both in Skopje) and the *Memorial House of Tose Proevski* in Krusevo, etc. However, there had been a lot of public argument surrounding the work of these museums. Contrary to the Law on Museums, all the work, even on the permanent displays in the museums, had been carried out by the Ministry of Culture, without appointing any managing or professional staff in the museums. On the other hand, some of the museums are controversial in form, especially the *Memorial House of Tose Proeski* (pop star recently deceased), or the *Memorial House of Mother Theresa*.

## 3.2. Archives and libraries

Until 1992, the municipalities (the local government) acted as founders of the public libraries (32). The government established the National Library as a public institution in 1945 and financed it completely. In the period of transition all public libraries were completely financed from the Budget of the Ministry of Culture.

In order to successfully cover the city area, the Skopje City Library "Miladinovci Brothers" still uses the so called "library-bus" - a specialised van that brings books to most distant villages in the area. This "library-bus" now has 1 500 registered users (mostly children) who pay a symbolic membership fee of 50 MKD (0.90 cents) per year.

In 2008, the Ministry of Culture announced a new measure to improve the book funds for libraries: every publisher is obliged to give (without any compensation) to the National and University Library 110 copies of the books that were supported by the Ministry of Culture. Most of the publishers were surprised by this measure, saying that it will decrease the financial help that they get from the state. It is estimated that this new measure will provide around 30 000 new books per year for the libraries.

In 2009, a new wing, measuring 15 000 sqm, was opened at the National and University Library at a cost of 86 million MKD (1.5 million EUR).

As a result of good co-operation between the Macedonian National Library in Skopje and the "Yunuz Emre" Institute from Ankara (Turkey) in the project "Reconstruction of the Balkan cultural heritage", 3 544 manuscripts and 1 000 fragmented pages (in total of 900 000 pages) in Arabic, Turkish and Persian language were digitalised in 2013. In the second phase of the project an electronic and a printed catalogue will be published.

Table 5: *Basic data on libraries by type, 2019*

|                          | National  | Tertiary educational institutions | Specialised | Other non-specialised | Libraries - national institutions | Public libraries |
|--------------------------|-----------|-----------------------------------|-------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------|
| Number of libraries      | 1         | 67                                | 47          | 3                     | 5                                 | 52               |
| Capacity of seats        | 254       | 2 234                             | 188         | 56                    | 40                                | 784              |
| Books (number of copies) | 1 151 552 | 1 022 473                         | 286 390     | 31 290                | 310 913                           | 1 280 798        |

Source: State Statistic Office: News Release No. 2.1.20.31 / 2020

### 3.3. Performing arts

According to the State Statistical Office data, in the 2016/2017 season, compared to 2015/2016, the number of performances at professional theatres increased by 10.3%, while attendance increased by 2.1%. The average attendance per performance was 185.

In the period 2016/2017, compared to 2015/2016, the number of performances at professional youth and children's theatres decreased by 4.8%, while attendance decreased by 7.1%.

In amateur theatres, for the same period, the number of performances decreased by 16.1%, and the number of visitors decreased by 23.2%.

In 2016/2017, in comparison with 2015/2016, the number of concerts and attendance at the Philharmonic Orchestra decreased.

Table 6: Theatres in Macedonia, by type, 2019/2020

| Type           | Number | Performances | Employees | Attendance |
|----------------|--------|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Professional   | 15     | 743          | 1 235     | 180 507    |
| Prof. children | 2      | 128          | 44        | 15 638     |
| Amateur        | 4      | 18           | 88*       | 3 212      |
| Total          | 21     | 890          | 1 279     | 199 357    |

Source: State Statistical Office, News Release No. 2.1.20.35 / 2020

\* Active members

The two leading musical institutions are the Philharmonic Orchestra and the Macedonian Opera and Ballet (both in Skopje). Their main objective is to present works from world music literature from various stylistic periods and promotion of works by local composers. Apart from these, several chamber ensembles are active, as well as many individual musicians.

The concert life is mainly concentrated in Skopje (as the capital city), whereas in the other towns it is occasional, depending on the conditions and possibilities to stage concerts, the interest and the tradition of the performing arts practice. Concerts in smaller towns are chamber concerts almost without exception.

The Ministry of Culture also supports the programme activities of the professional folk dance groups that foster vocal, dance and vocal-instrumental folklore tradition.

In 2017, the new building for the Macedonian Philharmonic was finally opened.

Table 7: Macedonian Philharmonic, 2016 - 2020

| Year      | Concerts | Attendance |
|-----------|----------|------------|
| 2016/2017 | 30       | 34 250     |
| 2017/2018 | 37       | 15 670     |

|           |    |        |
|-----------|----|--------|
| 2018/2019 | 47 | 83 000 |
| 2019/2020 | 62 | 47 773 |

Source: State Statistical Office, News Release No. 2.1.20.35/2020

There are no specific regulations for the performing arts as a separate field. But during the debates on the new National Strategy for Cultural Development 2018-2022, the Syndicate of the Cultural Workers (SKW) initiated a proposal to the Ministry of Culture to evaluate the need for a separate law on the performing arts. A working group was established and the proposal is now in a process of evaluation.

In 2013 the Ministry of Culture prepared and the Parliament adopted the *Law on the Support of the Domestic Music Production* which was strongly opposed by experts and the opposition. The Law aimed to support and promote domestic music production – mainly pop and folk music – for a period of ten years, to a total value of 5 million EUR. By means of yearly competition the creation of 200 new compositions (150 in the area of pop music and 50 in folk music and children's songs) were supposed to be financed. Compositions were selected in several categories: "talent", "renowned singer" "outstanding performer", "top performer", "songs that promote family values in society and families with many children" and "compositions that promote the history of Macedonia", and were financed with 3 000 EUR (1 500 EUR for the composition and production, and 1 500 EUR for a video clip). The "Children's song" were financed with 400 EUR (for the composition and production). The "Stars" category was financed with 4 500 EUR (3 000 EUR for composition and production, and 1 500 EUR for a video clip). Macedonian Radio and Television as a Public Broadcaster was authorised to carry out all of the work (announce a public call, choose members of the Commission, recordings etc.).

Due to a new cultural policy in this sector the Ministry of Culture annulled this Law in 2018.

### 3.4. Visual arts and crafts

One of the main characteristics in the visual arts in North Macedonia in the last years is artistic diversity, ranging from "traditional" painting and sculpture to contemporary works using video, installations, performances, computer art and alternative forms of expression.

There is a relatively well-developed network of museums and galleries that, in one way or another, deal with visual arts. However, only 3 institutions are entirely and professionally dedicated to studying and representing the visual arts: the National Gallery of Macedonia, the Museum of Contemporary Arts (both in Skopje) and the National Gallery in Tetovo. The work of other institutions is important too but the visual arts are not their only field of interest. Although not entirely dedicated to visual arts, it is part of the overall programme of activities of e.g. the Museum of the City of Skopje, the Cultural Information Centre in Skopje, the Art Gallery in Bitola (as part of the Bitola Museum), the Art Gallery in Strumica (as part of the Cultural Center) etc.

Fine art gatherings are organised once a year (approximately for 15 or 20 days) in artist colonies, too. Invited artists (local and foreign) attend and create works that afterwards become part of the colony collection. They are significant actors in the production and, especially, the popularisation of the visual arts. It should be pointed out that some of these colonies and especially the older ones (Prilep, Strumica and Resen) possess great and important collections of local and international art.

According to the data of the State Statistical Office (No. 2.1.21.14), there were 314 organised fine art exhibitions

in 2020, which represents a decrease of 41.7% compared with 2019. The number of artists-participants at the exhibitions in the same period declined by 44.1%, while attendance fell by 76.3%. In 2020, there were 18 organised fine art colonies, and the number of participants decreased by 32.3% compared with 2019

There are no special regulations for visual arts.

## 3.5. Cultural arts and creative industries

### 3.5.1. GENERAL DEVELOPMENTS

There is no overall legal framework to specifically promote and develop the cultural and creative industries. The legal provisions that affect cultural industries refer to specific cultural sectors (book production, music, audiovisual products, etc.) and to economic sectors, e.g., micro and small-medium sized enterprises, activities.

One of the burning public dilemmas in the field of culture during the period 2002-2010 was whether there was a cultural market in the country, and whether culture could exist under market conditions. One of the arguments on the deficit of a private market for culture is the small size of the territory and the low average income in the country, as well as the small language market (for example in the field of publishing). Together they limit the conditions required to develop a fully functioning cultural industry.

Initial mapping of the creative industries in Macedonia was done between 2006 and 2009, and again in 2012 in cooperation of the Ministry of Culture and the British Council. However, these initiatives were far from any real practice. For example, the British Council and the Ministry of Culture have "... expected 180 000 creative businesses to be opened in 2013 generating 150 000 new jobs"

(<https://creativeconomy.britishcouncil.org/blog/13/03/22/creative-industries-development-macedonia/>). This was unrealistic because it would mean employing almost half of unemployed people in Macedonia. Of course, none of this happened. On the other hand, the open competitions for cultural industries projects in 2013 and 2014 showed that there was still a big misunderstanding about the real meaning of the cultural industries: a lot of the projects came from the national and local institutions; most of the others had nothing to do with culture or industry, etc. Some of the financed projects as cultural creative industry projects ("Creative catering", "Food Festival", Music instruments made of everyday rubbish", "Producing almond milk and cheese products", educational workshops etc.) showed a complete lack of understanding of the essence and the role of cultural industries.

The *National Strategy for Cultural Development 2018-2022* foresees a new mapping of the potential resources for creative and cultural industries on a national, local and urban level along with an integrated strategy for the development of creative and cultural industries and its inclusion in the cultural politics on national and local levels. So far nothing has been put into practice.

### 3.5.2. BOOKS AND PRESS

After the privatisation of the state-owned publishing houses (12) in 1995, the period of transition saw the appearance of many new publishers. The number of entities registered for publishing activities reached 250-300. The financial resources that were allocated for publishing increased both in the official language and in the languages of the minorities: Albanian, Turkish, Vlach etc.



Government support is accomplished through the traditional forms of annual open competitions for financing of publishing projects. The Ministry of Culture continually allocates financial resources for the stimulation of literary creative work. These resources are intended to support authors (paying authors' fees, literary awards) and publishers (preparation and printing expenses).

In the period 2008-2015, the Ministry of Culture and the former government supported publishing hundreds of thousands of books in several so called capital editions ("Macedonian literature through the centuries", with 130 volumes, that cost 24 million MKD / 400 000 EUR; "100 Nobel prize winners in the Macedonian language", which cost approximately 500 000 EUR; "The stars of world literature"; "130 volumes of Macedonian literature in the English language", etc.). However, the new Government (2017) discovered that the funds were spent while the books stayed in the basements of several cultural institutions and never reached the potential users (libraries, school, universities, etc.).

Table 8: Published books and press (2017-2019)

| Year                             | 2017 | 2018 | 2019  |
|----------------------------------|------|------|-------|
| Books                            | 945  | 754  | 1 143 |
| Press (newspapers and magazines) | 29   | 25   | 27    |

Source: State Statistics Office, Mak Stat 2020

One of the most relevant issues throughout the last decade was media freedom, freedom of speech and decriminalisation of slander. According to the Ministry of Justice, 296 journalists were accused and prosecuted in the period 2014-2017 for slandering government officials or other holders of public office. Most of them were cancelled but 9 journalists were convicted and had to pay fines of 5-32 000 EUR (in each case). At the same time, some of the so called pro-government media accused several journalists of giving negative information to "Freedom House" about the media situation in the country.

According to the Reporters without Borders' World Press Freedom Index, in 2013 Macedonia was ranked in 116th place out of 176 countries, a drop of 22 positions compared to the previous year. According to Reporters without Borders, the reasons for the deterioration of media freedom in Macedonia lies in judicial harassment based on often inappropriate legislation, the lack of access to public data, physical and psychological violence against those who work in news and information, official and private advertising markets used as a tool, and the grey economy's hold over vital parts of the media. Macedonia was positioned on 109<sup>th</sup> place on the 2018 World Press Freedom Index. It was a slight improvement and the Rapporteur explained that "The fall of the Gruevski "regime" has led to a slight reduction in government control of the media but it is still too soon to be sure of the government's intention to engineer a lasting improvement in the situation"

(<https://rsf.org/en/republic-macedonia>). There has been no significant change in the economic situation of journalists, who are usually poorly paid and have no, or little, job security.

### 3.5.3. AUDIOVISUAL AND INTERACTIVE MEDIA

Film production has undergone fundamental transformations since 1991 which has resulted in the reorganisation and financing of films. After the establishment of the first private production house in 1989, the number of producers grew to over 100 firms. However, reality indicates that this unexpected and highly illogical increase in the number of production firms was not motivated by a willingness to promote film production.

Quite the opposite, the motivation was to have an opportunity to access public money. Nonetheless, some production firms have initiated a new model of co-productions and search for new co-financers from within the country and abroad.

According to the *Government's Decision on the Network of National Institutions in the Field of Culture* (December 2003), the only state producer, "Vardar Film", was reorganised as a professional film centre.

In 1954, there were 77 movie theatres located throughout the country, 86 in 1972 and since 1980 the number has continually decreased. Today, movies are screened in 21 film theatres and 41 cultural centres. In 2003, 704 films were shown, of which 22 were Macedonian, 674 were foreign and 8 were co-productions. The number of visitors was 277 211. Almost 95% of foreign movies originate from the USA, whereas the number of movies from European and other countries is significantly low.

In 1960, the capital Skopje had 17 cinemas, which has reduced to only two today. In 2006, 3 cinemas were closed. The total number of cinemas in Macedonia in 2007 was 16, with 6 686 seats. 426 films were shown at 3 834 cinema performances, with 130 546 visitors. According to the latest data, in 2017 there were 14 cinemas, in 2018 also 14, and in 2019 there were 15 cinemas.

In May 2006, the *Law on the Film Fund* was adopted by the Parliament. This was actually the first attempt to create a fund for financing culture as a kind of "arms-length" body of the Ministry of Culture. Twice a year (May and September) the Film Fund announces a public competition for funding film projects of national interest. Only registered film producers can apply for the competition. A minimum of 75% of the budget should be spent locally. The Film Fund should mostly finance films that can return some of the invested money. The Film Fund should also establish contacts with international producers and distributors and assist in the promotion and marketing of films etc.

In 2020, the Film Agency financed the organisation of 22 film festivals / manifestations and production of 4 feature films with a majority share, 6 feature films with a minority share, 4 debut feature films with a majority share, 13 short films with a majority share, 8 documentary films and 2 short animated film with a majority share.

The *Law on Film* (2013) provided better conditions for private sector investment (domestic and foreign) in the film industry. It foresaw the return of 20% of the invested private funds after the film is finished. The law also increased the amount of the participating funds for a film from 500 000 to 1 million EUR. According to this law the existing Film Fund changed into the Agency for Film, with a Managing Board and Film Council. The law came to power on 1 January 2014. In 2018, changes to the *Law on Film* were initiated.

Instead of the old *Law on the Founding of the Cinemateque of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia* (1974), a new *Law on Audio-visual Goods* was passed in 2008. The law regulates the basic conditions and working methods of a cinema, types of cinemateques and its set up, technical components, professional staff and other questions of interest. According to this Law, a cinemateque can be public (national or local) and private. The Minister of Culture decides whether these conditions are met.

In 2018, for the first time after the fall of communism, the Minister of Culture Ademi and the Director of the Film Agency Tozija tried to forbid public screening of the feature film "Mocking of Christ" by Jani Bojadzi on the grounds of a lack of artistic value and offensiveness towards the Albanian soldiers of 2001. At that time the film had already won a prize at the Montreal Film Festival and had its premiere in Skopje. On behalf of the Ministry

of Culture the Public Prosecution Office even submitted a case to the court. However, after a few days, the case was withdrawn.

The beginning of video production in North Macedonia (as an independent art form) is closely connected with Macedonian Television. Starting in 1985, it produced over 20 videos (financed by the Programme for Culture and Arts) and 2 experimental video films. The experimental video film "The Judge" by the artist Zaneta Vangeli was selected for the Venice Film Festival 2001.

#### 3.5.4. MUSIC

There are no specific policies that now promote music creative services in North Macedonia (see also chapter 3.3.)

#### 3.5.5. DESIGN AND CREATIVE SERVICES

*There are no specific policies that promote design and creative services in North Macedonia.*

#### 3.5.6. CULTURAL AND CREATIVE TOURISM

*Please find the available information on this subject in 3.5.1*

## 4. Law and legislation

### 4.1. General legislation

#### 4.1.1. CONSTITUTION

The *Constitution* (1991) guarantees the following rights related to culture:

- civil rights and freedoms;
- creative autonomy;
- the obligation to support and develop culture;
- the right of the different ethnic or national groups to establish institutions for culture and art;
- the protection of the cultural and historical heritage; and
- copyright protection.

#### 4.1.2. ALLOCATION OF PUBLIC FUNDS

In general, The Ministry of Culture distributes public funds for culture on the basis of an annual plan. The allocation of the overall state budget to different sectors is prescribed by law (annual Law on the National Budget).

The *Law on Local Self Government* (2002) re-allocated some responsibilities to the municipalities, such as: accomplishing and development of local interest in culture; institutional and financial support of cultural institutions and projects, preserving folklore, customs, old crafts and similar cultural values; organising cultural events; encouragement of various specific forms of art.

According to the *Decision on the Network of National Institutions in the Field of Culture*, 64 cultural institutions are considered local institutions. This means that the local authorities are responsible for financing some of the basic costs (running costs etc.) but, on the other hand, the salaries are still subsidized by the Ministry of Culture. The local institutions can apply for annual funding from the Ministry of Culture for programmes and specific projects.

The whole process of the annual funding of the so called national interest in the cultural field has been criticised for years by some intellectuals, cultural workers and NGO's, especially the programme for funding publishing houses, film, visual arts etc. The main points of criticism were on the grounds of insufficient transparency, that the biggest percentages of the funds were being allocated according to "party standards" and to people and firms close to the ruling political party, insufficient financial indicators for the projects etc. At the same time, in 2014-2017 the Ministry of Culture did not publicly announce members of the commissions who decided on the allocation of public funds. Furthermore, there were no annual reports of any kind, especially financial reports or any kind of financial information about the projects financed through the annual competitions.

In 2017, for the first time in many years, the annual funding was organised on a transparent basis, with publicly announced expert commissions and with final financial reports about the projects financed through the annual competitions. The new *National Strategy for Cultural Development 2018-2022* and the new *Law on Exercising the*

*Public Interest in Culture* (which is in preparation) foresee additional reforms in the annual funding (two or more public competitions per year, a public call for members of expert commissions, limits in the number of applications per applicant, introduction of “arm’s length principle” where possible etc.). However, the draft of the new *Law on Exercising the Public Interest in Culture* is in the Parliament for more than two years and hasn’t been put on its agenda yet.

#### 4.1.3. SOCIAL SECURITY FRAMEWORKS

General social security measures apply in the same manner to the culture field as any other sector. This also applies to unemployment schemes.

General social security measures also apply to freelance artists who have gained their status in appropriate procedures and have been confirmed by a proper *Act* of the Minister of Culture.

##### *The Law on Culture*

(1998, still in force) does not distinguish between independent professional and amateur artists. Every person, regardless of age, sex, education and religion has the freedom and the right to engage in creative work. The law defines an artist as a “person who creates or performs an authored artistic activity”. If an individual chooses art as a profession (the only one from which an income is earned), then he / she must legally register as such with the court in order to obtain the legal legitimacy as an independent artist. Independent artists are responsible for paying their health, retirement and disability insurance taxes. However, the Ministry can provide financial help from the budget to cover these expenses. The Minister of Culture decides which independent artists will receive these funds based on specific criteria including the type, scope and quality of their creative work, in a procedure and a manner determined by law.

In the year 2000, a Book of Rules was published. It outlines the selection criteria to be used in the allocation of public funding to independent artists, derived from the budget of the Republic. An annual competition is announced each September in the newspapers. The latest data shows that there are over 100 independent artists who benefit from the state budget, including writers, film workers, actors, musicians and visual artists etc. On the other hand, it also shows that the selection criteria are not clear since a lot of users of the funding are from the entertainment industry, fashion and crafts etc. It also shows that one of the main “criteria” is the political affinity of the artists.

That is why, on the basis of the *National Strategy for Cultural Development 2018-2022*, a working group was established to propose new rules and criteria for this category. This category should also include cultural workers. Unfortunately, like all other working groups, it did not finish its job.

#### 4.1.4. TAX LAWS

According to the *Law on Value Added Tax*, the turnover of cultural institutions, as well as that of other taxpayers who perform cultural activities, is exempt from VAT, provided they have approval from the Ministry of Culture. A privileged tax rate of 5% is applied to the turnover of publications, instead of the general rate of 18% that also applies to audio and visual products.

The *Law on Income Tax* stipulates that donations and sponsorship made to public culture institutions from

personal or company income can be calculated as deductible expenses up to a rate of 3% of the total income.

The *Law on Personal Income Tax* states that professional independent artists can deduct a fixed percentage share of their income as expenses generated by their creative work. The rates vary depending on the type of activity and range between 25% to 60%; for example, sculpture - 60%; painting - 50%; classical music, ballet, theatre and film performances - 30%; for pop and folk music - 25%, etc. Income tax is not charged on earnings generated from awards or on scholarships to pupils and students granted by government agencies and foundations.

The *Law on Customs Duty* list the following items which are not subject to import fees: printed material; objects and materials in the field of culture that are imported according to international agreements; goods that are brought into the country free-of-charge and are used for non-profit making cultural purposes; goods that are not produced in the country that are used for non-profit making cultural activities and are not intended for further sale; objects imported by museums, galleries, and the National and University Library that are intended for public use; objects exhibited during fairs and exhibitions; objects intended for cultural and artistic events and film-making; works of art that artists declare as their own works; awards and other objects received at foreign exhibitions, performances, etc., and objects received from foreign donors.

In January 2007, the *Law on Sponsorship and Donations* came into force. The *Law* encourages private persons and companies to sponsor humanitarian activities that are in the public interest (including arts and culture). The *Law* provides deductions (up to 20%) on the total yearly personal income for private donations, but not more than 24 000 MKD (400 EUR). Companies obtain deductions if they have donated more than 5% of their total yearly income. It is estimated that in the period January 2007 - June 2008, 2.5 million EUR was donated from the private sector for humanitarian purposes (including art and culture). More donations were registered in the first half of 2008 (1 591 000 EUR) than for all of 2007 (915 712 EUR).

In 2010 the Parliamentary Committee for Culture had a debate on some key issues of the *Law on Sponsorship and Donations*. Some of the recommendations were: to simplify the procedure for sponsorship, to suggest bigger tax reductions, to clearly mark the cultural projects of public / national interest, to encourage companies to sponsor and donate to culture etc.

However, 2012 showed again that most of the sponsorship and donation funds go to pop and folk concerts and sports events and just a small percentage to culture. Most of the marketing experts argue that additional tax reductions and benefits should be offered.

#### 4.1.5. LABOUR LAWS

General labour laws apply in the same manner to the culture field as in any other sector that is funded from the government's budget. There is also (more or less) a unified system of salaries for those working in the public sector.

The *Retirement Law* that came into effect in September 2007 made huge changes in the general retirement policy that seriously affected the cultural sector. Changes were made to the benefit of some groups in the cultural sector. It especially concerns ballet dancers in the Macedonian National Ballet, who now are required to work more years than before. The old law had guaranteed a special status to this profession - one year was calculated as a year and a half - so the ballet dancers could retire after 20-25 years' work (at the age of 40-45). Now, according to the new law, the special status is still designated but the calculations have changed: 1 year for

every three years! So the ballet dancers will have to work for nearly ten more years: female dancers until 53 years of age and male dancers until 56. The same problem applies to all the brass instrumentalists in the Macedonian music institutions.

The amendments (2014) to the *Retirement Law* provide the possibility (on a written request) for men to work until 67 and for women until 65. However, several women university professors submitted to the Constitutional Court an initiative for equalisation of retirement rights. The Macedonian Helsinki Committee also objected to these amendments.

There is also standardised collective bargaining agreements used when negotiating contracts with state run institutions. The first *Collective Agreement* was signed in June 2005 (as a first of its kind in the period of Transition) and it was amended in March 2006. During 2017 / 2018 a new *Collective Agreement* was in preparation and it was finalised and signed in December 2019. One of the biggest gains from this *Collective Agreement* is the increase of the salaried in the field of culture and its nivelation in all cultural institutions in the country.

According the urgent amendments to the *Law on Culture* (February 2014), the status of employees in the public cultural institutions has radically changed. Cultural workers in public institutions are classified into 3 groups: administrative staff (whose labour rights fall under the *Law on Administration*), cultural service providers (whose labour rights fall under the *Law on Culture*) and technical staff (whose labour rights fall under the *Law on Employees in the Public Sector*). The main category – the so called cultural service providers – has several subcategories: artist, assistant artist, skilled stage worker, skilled cultural collaborator, and skilled collaborator in the protection of cultural heritage, etc. Then, each subcategory has several levels. For example, the subcategory "artist" is further divided into "first category artist", "second category artist", concert maestro, etc.

On the other hand, the *National Strategy for Cultural Development 2018-2022* promotes a status for cultural workers outside of the *Law on Administration*. However, the draft of the new Law on exercising the public interest in culture (which awaits Parliamentary procedure for almost two years) does not comply with this National Strategy.

In 2020, due to the KOVID-19 pandemic, a *Law on financial support to citizens with low income, pensioners, social security beneficiaries and elderly people, young people, single parents, parentless children, independent artists and cultural workers, film workers and entertainment artists* was adopted by the Parliament. It guaranteed a certain (tax free) financial support to these categories during the KOVID-19 pandemic.

#### 4.1.6. COPYRIGHT PROVISIONS

Copyright and related rights are regulated by the *Law on Copyright and Related Rights* (1996). Although this law generally provides copyright protection according to international standards, additional amendments are required to harmonise articles in line with the directives of the European Union.

In the period of transition, especially prior to 1996, violations of copyright were widespread such as the unauthorised copying of literary works, multiplication and distribution of videotapes, musical and film CDs and computer software. Since the establishment of many private broadcasting companies and cable operators, the unauthorised broadcasting and re-broadcasting of audio-visual works is ever more present.

The Ministry of Culture has several inspectors to investigate copyright violations as part of their official

responsibility and upon request from rights-holders. Collecting bodies, competent courts, customs bodies and other government agencies are all involved in the direct implementation of the law and the protection of copyright.

In 2003, the Ministry of Culture undertook a huge "operation" to publicly destroy over 39 000 illegal videotapes, CDs and computer software. It did strengthen the public interest and awareness of the problems of copyright and reduced the amount of piracy to a certain degree.

Author's rights remain in force 70 years after his / her death. Audio-visual rights also remain in force 70 years after the legal publishing of a work. In the case of multiple authors, property rights remain in force until the death of the last living author.

Moral rights are applied. While there has not been any specific debate about moral rights, there has been constant public debate (initiated by authors and the media) on the protection of authors' rights in popular and classical music.

A new *Law on Copyright and Related Rights* was adopted and came into force at the end of 2010. It strengthened copyright protection so that most violations were subject to Criminal Law. A Coordinative body had been established and is responsible for field actions.

The *Law on Copyright and Related Rights* was constantly mentioned in the past few years during public debates over the controversial government project "Skopje 2014", when several modern buildings from the 1960s and 1970s were set to be re-designed in a pseudo-baroque manner. But there was no reaction from the Ministry of Culture.

Another burning issue in 2014 was the activation of the performers' and the phonogram producers' right to remuneration from the single equitable remuneration for public use of phonograms with performances published for commercial purposes. The 2013 amendments to the *Law on Copyright and Related Rights* require broadcasting organisations to have an electronic system for control and evidence of broadcasted musical works. The Association of Broadcasters strongly opposed this measure, claiming that they work on popularisation of Macedonian music.

However, the issue of copyrights provisions is almost completely marginalized in the past several years.

#### 4.1.7. DATA PROTECTION LAWS

2007 saw the implementation of three important laws: the *Law on Free Access to Public Information*, the *Law on Safety of Classified Information* and the *Law on Protection of Personal Data*. Public attention was mostly focused on the *Law on Free Access to Public Information* and the *Law on Protection of Personal Data*.

According to the NGO sector (Foundation Open Society Institute, "Metamorphosis" and another 13 organisations included in the monitoring system), improvement in the implementation and application of these laws was necessary. This especially applied to the *Law on Free Access to Public Information*. 625 applications were submitted to 75 institutions at central level and 31 at municipal level, with only 38% having been answered at central level and 58% at local level.



The data delivered in the Report of the Commission for Protection on Free Access to Public Information for 2012 showed that during the seven years of implementation of the Law there were 3 545 complaints registered. The Commission had positively solved 2 583 complaints. In 2012 there were 1 225 complaints, out of which 151 are personal complaints and the rest are from NGO's and foundations. 907 complaints (74.4%) relate to the silence of the administration. Most of the complaints are about public health institutions (525), state institutions on the central level (396), local institutions (226), judicial institutions (44) etc. However, the Open Society Institute sent an Open letter to the President of the Parliament saying that the Commission's Report deals with false information, that there is a cover up of unsuccessful implementation of the Law, that there are no recommendations to overcome the high percentage of the cases of "silence of administration", etc.

The 2017 Report of the Commission for Protection on Free Access to Public Information showed an increase in the number of the complaints from citizens and companies due to the "silence of the administration" (over 75% of the complains). The Commission has responded positively in 87% of the cases. In 2017 there were 758 registered complaints (619 in 2016) to the Commission – of which 285 (25%) were from citizens and 473 from citizens associations and companies.

#### 4.1.8. LANGUAGE LAWS

The Constitution and the *Law on the Use of the Macedonian Language* (1998) determine its official status and its use in the public sphere.

According the *Ohrid Framework Agreement* (2001), in the units of local self-government, where at least 20% of the population speak a language other than Macedonian, that language and its alphabet will be used as an official language, in addition to the Macedonian language and its Cyrillic alphabet (see also chapter 4.2.4).

Macedonian Radio Television as a Public Broadcasting Service fosters the use of the Macedonian language and the Cyrillic alphabet in radio and television programmes. The Second Channel of Macedonian Radio Television is completely open to programmes in the languages of the cultural communities, namely: Albanian, Turkish, Serbian, Romany, Vlach etc. (see also chapter 4.2.6).

In 2008, the Parliament passed the new Rules of Procedure and the new *Law on the Use of the Albanian language*. According to this document, starting from 2009, the Parliamentary committees can be conducted in the Albanian language as well.

In January 2018, after a long and burning public debate, the Parliament passed the new *Law on the Use of Languages*. The Law stipulates the use of the Albanian language at national and local level. However, this led to a recent political incident when the Parliamentary speaker Dzaferi gave his address in Albanian (his native language) during the Summit "European Parliament – Western Balkan" in Brussels in June 2021. Experts say he thus infringed the Constitution.

#### 4.1.9. OTHER AREAS OF GENERAL LEGISLATION

General laws and regulations that influence culture and cultural policy are numerous and include the *Labour Law, Associations' Law, Tax and Custom Regulations, Law on NGO's and Foundations, Anti-trust Laws, Law on the Implementation of the State Budget* etc. They also include laws that regulate the organisation and work of public administration bodies and units of local administration and self-government. Collective agreements in the state

and public sector also have to be taken into account as well as the sectorial specific agreements and other related regulations. It has to be noted that there is a tendency of frequent change in regulations and especially in adequate implementation of said regulation.

The *Law on Import, Circulation and Distribution of Foreign Printed Material, Foreign Films and Information Activities* regulates the means of import, circulation and distribution of foreign printed materials and films, foreign information agencies, accreditation of foreign journalists etc. The main authority for foreign correspondents is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Foreign countries and international organisations can establish information agencies but only based on bilateral agreement. Foreign TV crews that stay less than 30 days will need permission from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to do so. Foreign companies will not have the right to make surveys or inquiries of any kind.

The *Law on Estimation* (2010, amended 2012) regulates the process of estimation in copyright and related rights and the Ministry of Culture is authorised to give licenses to the estimators in this field. This law also affects the (market) estimation of the value of the artworks, antiquities etc.

## 4.2. Legislation on culture

### 4.2.1. GENERAL LEGISLATION ON CULTURE

The legal framework in the Republic of North Macedonia that regulates the cultural processes and work of its institutions consists of a set of laws, by-laws, strategies and yearly strategic operating plans of the Ministry of Culture.

The main law in the field of culture is the *Law on Culture* (1998) which was meant to be a unified law on the cultural field. When it was passed in 1998, partial co-ordination was achieved between the existing constitutional system and the new social, political and economic conditions in the country. It also guaranteed the freedom of creative work and related rights; made possible the introduction of a civil concept of culture; an equal status for public and private entities that work in the field of culture; introduction of a decentralised system for culture; financing activities in the "national interest" through an open competition, etc. However, it is important to note that past experience with the *Law on Culture* revealed many weaknesses and pointed out the necessity for amendments. It became clear that a re-evaluation of the *Law on Culture* was necessary. Subsequently, the *Law on Culture* was amended 17 times.

The *National Strategy for Cultural Development* stated that the *Law on Culture* has become old-fashioned, rigid and anachronous. According to this Strategy a new Law on exercising the public interest in culture was prepared (2019) and awaits the Parliamentary procedure.

Table 9: *Legislation on culture*

| Title of the act  | Year of adoption   |
|---|--|
| <i>Law on Compulsory Deposits to the National Library</i> | 1994 (amended 2008/2011)                                 |
| <i>Law on Copyright and Related Rights</i>                | 2010 (amended 2011/2015)                                 |
| <i>Law on the Use of the Macedonian Language</i>          | 1998 (amended 1998/2003/ 2005/2008/2010/2013/ 2015/2017) |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <i>Law on Culture</i>   | 1998 (amended 1998/2003/2005/ 2007/2010/2011/2012/2013/ 2014/2015/2016/2018) |
| <i>Law on Protection of Cultural Heritage</i>   | 2004 (amended 2004/2007/2011/2013/2014/ 2015/2016/2018)                      |
| <i>Law on Museums</i>   | 2004 (amended 208, 2010, 2011/2015/2016)                                     |
| <i>Law on Libraries</i>   | 2004 (amended 2008/2010/2011/2015/2016)                                      |
| <i>Law on Memorial Monuments and Commemorative Sites</i>  | 2004 (amended 2008/2015)   |
| <i>Media Law</i>  | 2005   |
| <i>Law on the Film Fund</i>   | 2006 (amended 2008, 2011, 2012)  |
| <i>Law on Publishing</i>  | 2014 (amended 2015)  |
| <i>Law on Audio-visual Goods</i>  | 2008 amended 2011  |
| <i>Law on the Protection of the Skopje Old Bazaar as a significant cultural monument</i>        | 2008 amended 2010  |
| <i>Law on Copyright and Related Rights</i>  | 2010   |
| <i>Law on Governing of the World Natural and Cultural Heritage in the Ohrid Region</i>          | 2011 (amended 2015)  |
| <i>Law on the National Artists of the Republic of Macedonia</i>                                 | 2011 (annuled 2017)  |
| <i>Law on the Protection of the old town centre of Krusevo as significant cultural heritage</i> | 2012   |
| <i>Law on the Support of Domestic Music Production</i>  | 2013 (annuled 2018)  |
| <i>Law on Film</i>  | 2013 (amended 2014/2015/2016/2018)   |
| <i>Law on State Awards</i>  | 2006 (amended 2007)  |
| <i>Law on Audiovisual Goods</i>   | 2008 (amended 2011/2016)   |
| <i>Law on the Protection of the old town centre of Kratovo as significant cultural heritage</i> | 2014   |
| <i>Law on the Protection of the old town centre of Bitola as significant cultural heritage</i>  | 2015   |

The Republic of North Macedonia has ratified the following UN conventions which are under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Culture:

1. Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict with Regulations for the Execution of the Convention.
2. Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Properties.
3. Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage.
4. Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.
5. Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.
6. Universal Copyright Convention, with Appendix Declaration relating to Articles XVII and Resolution concerning Article XI and Universal Copyright Convention as revised in Paris on July 24, 1971, with an Appendix Declaration relating to Article XVII and the Resolution concerning Article XI.
7. Convention for the Protection of Producers of Phonograms against Unauthorized Duplication of their Phonograms.
8. Convention Establishing the World Intellectual Property Organization.(Source: Ministry of Culture)

The Republic of North Macedonia has been a member of UNESCO since 28 June 1993. It ratified various conventions including the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions

(2007) and the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2006). Between 2016 and 2017, UNESCO's Participation Programme approved 5 projects that MK participated in, including 1 regional project. Lake Ohrid region is a World Heritage Site since 1979. Bitola became a UNESCO Creative City of Film in 2015 (part of UNESCO Creative Cities Network). The country is included in the UNESCO/EU action to Fight Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Property.

Table 10: *Relations with the Council of Europe*

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Date of application                    | 13 May 1993: Special Guest Status with the Assembly 25 June 1993: Date of candidature for accession   |
| Accession                              | 9 November 1995 <a href="#">Opinion 191 (1995)</a> Application by "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"* for membership of the Council of Europe  |
| Ratification ECHR                      | 10 April 1997   |
| Relations with the Court               | Judge to the <a href="#">European Court of Human Rights</a> : Jovan Ilievski (since February 2017). The Court dealt with 257 applications concerning "The Republic of North Macedonia" in 2019, of which 246 were declared inadmissible or struck out. It delivered 12 judgments (concerning 11 applications), 9 of which found at least one violation of the ECHR. <a href="#">ECtHR/Country Profile</a> (last updated: July 2020) |
| Execution of Judgements of the ECHR    | <a href="#">Country Factsheet – North Macedonia</a> (updated: October 2020)   |
| Signature/Ratification CoE Conventions | To date, North Macedonia has signed and ratified the following (95) <a href="#">conventions</a> . To date, North Macedonia has signed but not ratified the following (9) <a href="#">conventions</a> . To date, North Macedonia has neither signed nor ratified the following (104) <a href="#">conventions</a> .   |

(Source: *Cultural Policy Review of the Republic of North Macedonia* ((Online Peer Review, December 2020), Council of Europe)

| Ratification of major Council of Europe Conventions |   |            |            |
|---|---|------------|------------|
|   | Title   | Signed     | Ratified   |
|   | <b><i>ECHR Protocol:</i></b>  |            |            |
| 4   | Protocol 16 ECHR  |            |            |
| 3   | Protocol 15 ECHR  | 21/11/2013 | 16/06/2016 |
| 187   | Protocol 13 ECHR  | 3/5/2002   | 13/7/2004  |
| 177   | Protocol 12 ECHR  | 4/11/2000  | 13/7/2004  |
| 114   | Protocol 6 ECHR   | 14/6/1996  | 10/4/1997  |
|   |   |            |            |
|   | <b><i>Minorities:</i></b>   |            |            |
| 157   | Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities   | 25/7/1996  | 10/4/1997  |
| 148   | European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages   | 25/7/1996  |            |
|   |   |            |            |
|   | <b><i>Social Charter:</i></b>   |            |            |
| 163   | European Social Charter (Revised)   | 27/5/2009  | 06/01/2012 |
| 035   | European Social Charter   | 5/5/1998   | 31/3/2005  |
|   |   |            |            |
|   | <b><i>Others:</i></b>   |            |            |
| 174   | Civil Law Convention on Corruption  | 8/6/2000   | 29/11/2002 |
| 173   | Criminal Law Convention on Corruption   | 28/7/1999  | 28/7/1999  |
| 166   | On Nationality  | 6/11/1997  | 3/6/2003   |
| 132   | On Transfrontier Television   | 30/5/2001  | 18/11/2003 |
| 122   | European Charter of Local Self-Government   | 14/6/1996  | 6/6/1997   |
| 108   | For the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic processing of Personal Data                    | 24/3/2006  | 24/3/2006  |
| 106   | European Outline Convention on Trans frontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities |            |            |

(Source: *Cultural Policy Review of the Republic of North Macedonia* ((Online Peer Review, December 2020), Council of Europe)

#### 4.2.2. LEGISLATION ON CULTURE AND NATURAL HERITAGE

The *Law on Protection of Cultural Heritage* (2004) defines public services in this field and all available legal mechanisms to ensure the protection of cultural monuments. Cultural heritage may be publicly or privately owned and may be exported only in exceptional cases with permission from the Minister of Culture.

Private owners have an obligation to care and maintain cultural heritage and property, and to provide access to them for scientific / cultural research purposes and in some cases to provide access to the general public. Under

certain conditions the owner has the right to receive compensation from the Ministry for some maintenance costs.

In 2007, the *Law on Protection of Cultural Heritage* was amended, in order to harmonise it with EU legislation and standards. Bigger changes were made in the procedure of restitution of cultural heritage goods, the measures for getting permission for archaeological excavations, some of the control measures etc.

There are several laws that regulate the environment and natural heritage: *Law on Protection of Natural Heritage*, *Law on Protection against Environmental Noise*, *Law on Waters* etc. The *Law on Protection of Natural Heritage* regulates the rights and obligations of the central and local governments, the City of Skopje, and the rights and obligations of the citizens in the protection of the environment, the natural heritage etc. Main responsibilities for executing this law lie within the Ministry of Environment and Social Planning.

One of the major issues in the past four years (2017-2021) on the protection of cultural and natural heritage is the city and region of Ohrid – protected by UNESCO as a cultural and natural heritage area since 1979. However, the UNESCO recommendations for Ohrid and the region for the past decade were completely disregarded by the central and the local governments and the result is the possibility of losing the status of UNESCO protected city/region.

#### 4.2.3. LEGISLATION ON PERFORMANCE AND CELEBRATION

There is no special legislation on performance and celebration.

#### 4.2.4. LEGISLATION ON VISUAL ARTS AND CRAFTS

There is no special legislation on visual arts and crafts.

#### 4.2.5. LEGISLATION ON BOOKS AND PRESS

*Law on Publishing* (2014, amended 2015).

#### 4.2.6. LEGISLATION ON AUDIOVISUAL AND INTERACTIVE MEDIA

*Law on Audio-visual Goods* (2008, amended 2011).

#### 4.2.7. LEGISLATION ON DESIGN AND CREATIVE SERVICES

*Law on Audio-visual Goods* (2008, amended 2011).

## 5. Arts and cultural education

### 5.1. Policy and institutional overview

The education of artists and experts takes place within the framework of the secondary and higher education institutions in the country, that fall within the departmental competence of the Ministry of Education and Science. The Ministry of Culture does not participate in the preparation of the curricula and in the establishment of the network of educational institutions. However, within the framework of inter-departmental co-operation, it can influence educational policy, from the point of view of culture.

The *Strategy for Education 2018-2022* as a strategy document in the educational field is mainly directed at the:

- Quality of education and its relevance to the development priorities of society;
- Development of the generic and key competences of the students as critical subjects and active and relevant participants in social life;
- Infrastructure of the educational system;
- Human resources capacities;
- Autonomy of the educational institutions, especially universities, as well as the subjects of the educational process, etc.

On the other hand, cultural education is one of the key points of the National Strategy for Cultural Development 2018-2022. It projects closer cooperation and coordination between the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Education and Science on the student quotas for certain important cultural study programmes, specific student programmes for underdeveloped professions (for example studies on conservation and restoration) in the cultural field etc.

In order to make up for a deficiency of artists and experts in the field of culture, the Ministry of Culture awards scholarships for post-graduate professional development of young and talented artists, for regular academic education, as well as for studies abroad in fields where there are a lack of possibilities to undertake the same programmes in North Macedonia.

(See also 2.5.1. about religious education)

### 5.2. Arts in schools

The *Strategy for Education 2018-2022* as a strategic document in the educational field is mainly directed to:

- Quality of the education and its relevance to the development priorities of the society;
- Development of the generic and key competences of the students as critical subjects and active and relevant participants in social life;
- Infrastructure of the educational system;
- Human resources capacities;
- Autonomy of the educational institutions, especially universities, as well as the subjects of the educational process, etc.

## 5.3. Higher arts and cultural education

The Ministry of Education and Science annually supports education and professional development programmes for staff employed in culture institutions. Thus, in order to make up for a deficiency of artists and experts in the field of culture, the Ministry of Culture awards scholarships for post-graduate professional development of young and talented artists, for regular academic education, as well as for studies abroad in fields where there is a lack of possibilities to undertake the same programmes in the FYR of Macedonia.

The Bologna process on higher education, on their structures, curricula or programmes has just started to occupy the public attention. It is too early to talk about any results.

What is also interesting concerning art education is the opening of several private art academies during 2007 to 2009: ESRA Film Academy, Academia Italiana (art and design), Art and Design Faculty, etc.

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

*Please find the available information on this subject in chapter 5.1*

## 5.5. Vocational and professional training

*Please find the available information on this subject in chapter 5.1.*



## 6. Cultural participation and consumption

### 6.1. Policies and programmes

There are no specific programmes or policy initiatives to promote participation in cultural life or an explicit policy linking participation in cultural life to the broader issues of civic participation, citizenship, civil society development / cohesion etc.

Special segments of the population (school children, students) pay 50% of the full ticket price for museums, but this can hardly be called a programme or policy initiative.

In 2008, the project "Active citizenship and participative cultural policy" was promoted by the Multimedia Centre for Performing Arts. The project-workshop was aimed at the representatives of local administrations, cultural institutions and local NGOs of initially five communities. The main goal was finding suitable mechanisms that would lead to systematic cultural development in the local communities.

Cultural participation is one of the key goals of the new National Strategy for Cultural Development 2018-2022. The document insists on accessibility and participation in cultural processes and on investing in the development of the public and the cultural needs of the citizens. It also underlines the necessity of the equal participation of deprived and marginalized groups in cultural production and socio-cultural life. Significant players in this direction are the national institutions and their programmes that have to ensure the development of public and inclusive projects for everyone. However, none have been put into practice yet.

### 6.2. Trends and figures in cultural participation

According to the State Statistical Office data (News Release No: 2.1.20.35) for the 2019/2020 season, compared to 2018/2019, the number of performances at professional theatres decreased by 40.6%, and attendance decreased by 39.4%. The average number of visitors per performance was 221. In the period 2019/2020, compared to 2018/2019, the number of performances at professional youth and children's theatres decreased by 40.3% and attendance by 36.7%.

In amateur theatres, for the same period, the number of performances decreased by 85.1 % and the number of visitors decreased by 86.5%. In 2019/2020, in comparison with 2018/2019, the number of concerts increased, while attendance at the Philharmonic decreased. Regarding professional folk dance and song ensembles in 2019/2020, compared to 2018/2019, there was a decrease in the number of concerts and the number of visitors.

According to the data of the State Statistical Office (News Release No: 2.1.21.14), there were 314 organised fine art exhibitions in 2020, which represents a decrease of 41.7% compared with 2019. The number of artists-participants at the exhibitions in the same period declined by 44.1%, while attendance fell by 76.3%. In 2020, there were 18 organised fine art colonies, and the number of participants compared with 2019 decreased by 32.3%. There is no clear explanation for the decrease in 2019, but the significant decreases in 2020 is mainly caused by the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

According to the official data and the classification of libraries, there are several types of libraries in the Republic

of North Macedonia, such as: national, libraries within tertiary education institutions, specialised libraries, non-specialised, libraries-national institutions and public (popular) libraries. In 2019, compared with 2016, the number of specialised libraries decreased by 9.6 %. The number of other libraries in 2019, compared with 2016, slightly increased (State Statistical Office, News Release No: 2.1.20.31).

According to official data, the number of museum visitors in 2018 was 427 493. Of the total of 26 museums, 18 are public (national) museums, 8 are public (local) museums, while 15 are general and 11 are specialised museums. In 2018, the museums organised 117 custom exhibitions, of which 39 exhibitions were organised by general museums and 78 by specialised museums. There were 170 440 inventoried exhibits in the museums, of which 26 615 were displayed in 2018. The museum collections had 167 827 inventoried exhibits, with 26 282 on display. The data presented in this release were obtained from completed questionnaires for 2018, submitted by 26 museums and 40 museum collections. The number of internet users in the period January-march 2019 increased by 3% compared to the same period in 2018.

Table 11: Number of attendances on certain cultural activity in North Macedonia over 3 available years

| Year  | 2017/2018           | 2018/2019      | 2019/2020         |
|---|---------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| Activities heavily subsidised by the state          |                     |                |                   |
| Theatre*  | 232 000 (2013/2014) | 257 080        | 156 407           |
| Opera performances                                  | NA                  | NA             | NA                |
| Zarzuela  | /                   | /              | /                 |
| Dance   | NA                  | NA             | NA                |
| National Philharmonic                               | 15 670              | 83 000         | 47 773            |
| Libraries   | 893 409 (2016)      | 851 600(2019)  | /                 |
| Museums (and museum collections**)                  | 250 582 (2012)      | 476 385 (2015) | 427 493 (2018)    |
| Monuments   | /                   | /              | /                 |
| Cultural centres                                    | /                   | /              | /                 |
| Activities without large public subsidies           |                     |                |                   |
| Cinema  | 466 926 (2018)      | 539 000 (2019) | 128 315 (2020)*** |
| Internet for entertainment or leisure (Usually use) | 1 212 347           | 1 287 924      | 1 326 973         |

Source(s): State Statistical Office.

\* Professional theatres including professional youth and children's theatres.

\*\* The data presented here also includes 40 museum collections, but it is unclear which collections and their locations.

\*\*\* The data includes only 11 cinemas.

According to the data of the State Statistical Office, the structure of activities of persons aged over 10 for the year 2014/2015 shows that sleeping takes up 36% (8 hours and 44 minutes); free time activities take up with 22% (5 hours and 17 minutes) and cover socialising, visiting and receiving visitors, telephone conversations, entertainment and culture, resting, sports, walking, hiking, art, using computers, reading books or magazines, watching TV, listening to music, etc. Domestic activities make up 10% of all other activities during the day (2 hours and 25 minutes); this group includes the following activities: food preparation, dish washing, cleaning, laundry, ironing, handicrafts, gardening, caring for pets, as well as other activities related to the household such as construction and repairs, shopping and services, childcare and other unspecified activities. Employment

accounts for 10% (2 hours and 30 minutes), comprising the main and second job, including short breaks during working time, traveling during the working time, overtime work, business trips, seminars, etc. Eating and drinking represent 9% (2 hours and 14 minutes). Traveling takes up 4% (52 minutes): travel from and to work, travel related to study, shopping and services, childcare, other household care, social life, travel related to other leisure, i.e. for entertainment, hobby, sport, resting, etc. Studying takes up 4% of time (46 minutes), covering regular classes and lectures, laboratory work, practice, short breaks between classes at school or university, homework, studying in a library and free time study and courses, etc.

Table 12: Average cultural time used per day of persons, aged 20 to 64, by activities, 2014-2015

| Activities in hours and minutes | Total | Male | Female |
|---------------------------------|-------|------|--------|
| Entertainment and culture       | 0.01  | 0.01 | 0.01   |
| Arts                            | 0.01  | 0.00 | 0.01   |
| Computer and video games        | 0.01  | 0.02 | 0.00   |
| Other computing                 | 0.28  | 0.34 | 0.22   |
| Other hobbies and games         | 0.01  | 0.02 | 0.01   |
| Reading books                   | 0.04  | 0.02 | 0.05   |
| Reading magazines and other     | 0.02  | 0.03 | 0.01   |
| Watching TV, videos, DVDs       | 1.52  | 2.01 | 1.42   |
| Radio and music                 | 0.01  | 0.01 | 0.01   |
| Unspecified activities          | 0.01  | 0.01 | 0.00   |

Source: State Statistical Office, *Time use survey*, 2014/2015.

Table 13: Number of visitors in specific cultural fields, in thousands, 2000-2017

| Year      | Professional theatres | Cinemas | Museums | Libraries (members) |
|-----------|-----------------------|---------|---------|---------------------|
| 2000/2001 | 286                   | 427     | 163     | 69                  |
| 2005/2006 | 248                   | 96      | 163     | 74                  |
| 2010/2011 | 342                   | 119     | 957     | 62                  |
| 2012/2013 | 236                   | 425     | 491     | 62                  |
| 2016/2017 | 238                   | 471     | 476     | 43                  |

Source: State Statistical Office: *Macedonia in Figures 2012*; *Macedonia in Figures 2014*, *Macedonia in Figures 2018*.

Heavily subsidised activities (e.g. theatres, museums, concerts etc.) have, more or less, a stable number of visitors. There is no accurate data on participation in activities that are not publicly subsidised (e.g. press, private or cable television etc.).

There have been no official surveys taken in recent years on the cultural activity of social groups differing with respect to gender, age or education. There are no special surveys monitoring the participation of national minority groups or immigrant groups in the cultural life of a community or the composition of the audience at multi-cultural festivals.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that Prof. Predrag Cveticanin from Nis, Serbia, conducted a research in 2007 on cultural needs and habits of citizens of Serbia and Macedonia which to a certain extent reflects cultural habits in

selected fields and for certain parts of Macedonia. It is available under:

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/73755569/Kulturne-Potrebe-Navike-i-Ukus-Gradjana-Srbije-i-Makedonije>.

## 6.3. Trends and figures in household expenditure

Table 14: Household expenditure on recreation and culture, in %, 2015-2019

| Year       | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
|------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Share in % | 2.5  | 1.9  | 1.8  | 1.7  | 1.6  |

Source: State Statistical Office, North Macedonia in numbers, 2020.

In 2019, an average household in North Macedonia spends 63.4% of its expenditure on basic needs like food, clothes, housekeeping etc.

Table 15: Household expenditure on recreation and culture, in %, 2003-2011

| Year       | 2003 | 2005 | 2007 | 2009 | 2011 |
|------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Share in % | 3.3  | 3.5  | 3.3  | 2.9  | 2.9  |

Source: *Macedonia in Figures 2012*, State Statistical Office of the Republic of Macedonia.

Table 16: Basic data on GDP [2017-2018]

| Year                               | 2017    | 2018    |
|------------------------------------|---------|---------|
| GDP (market prices) in million MKD | 618 106 | 658 053 |
| - Real growth rate (in %)          | 1.1     | 2.7     |
| - in million EUR                   | 10 038  | 10 698  |
| - per capita in EUR                | 4 839   | 5 153   |

Source: State Statistical Office, North Macedonia in numbers, 2020

## 6.4. Culture and civil society

There are several important points that indicate the relationship between culture and civil society in North Macedonia. For example, there is a strong connection between the development of culture and the “socialistic” tradition of amateur arts and folk culture. The infrastructure of cultural and educational centres has also a long tradition throughout the country and, of course, there is the changing role that civil society organisations in contemporary arts and culture have and their impact on the whole society, etc.

The primary mission of cultural houses and cultural centres is to conduct activities in the field of culture and to facilitate cultural life on the local level. In addition to professional programmes, amateurism is a special target of these institutions, through the establishment of amateur clubs in the field of music, theatre, film, literature, folklore, fine arts, etc. Some of these cultural houses did function on a satisfactory level, performing continuous and varied activities, while there were some whose existence was noticeable only in the payrolls of the Ministry of Culture. Until the 1990s, there were around 50 cultural houses located throughout the country. However,

today it is obvious that central and local governments often underestimate the role of these cultural segments in society.

The Cinema Union was comprised of 19 amateur film clubs from several towns. Since 1996, it has been a legitimate member of the International Union of Amateur Film headquartered in the Netherlands. During the period 1956 and 2000, it was estimated that 1 353 amateur films were made in the country. According to the latest data the number of amateur theatres is decreasing (from 9 in 2015 to 4 in 2019). Until December 2000, 15 amateur clubs were designated with the status of national cultural institution which meant that the Ministry of Culture provided salaries for approximately thirty employees. Since the beginning of 2001, these clubs have been receiving funds only for programme activities.

Civil society and the cultural NGO's were an important component in the citizens' protest against the regime during the former government (2006-2017).

## 7. Financing and support

### 7.1. Public funding

#### 7.1.1. INDICATORS

Ministry of Culture is the main source of funding for culture

The Ministry of Culture is responsible for distributing public funds for culture on the basis of an annual plan, which is developed by the Ministry at the end of the year for the following year. The allocation of the overall state budget to different sectors is prescribed by law (annual *Law on the National Budget*).

The Ministry of Culture is the main source of funding for culture. It provides annual funding to the national cultural (and local) institutions (salaries, investments, running costs such as heating, insurance of equipment, buildings, exhibits, etc.) and for specific programmes/projects on the basis of competitions. The amount of money reserved for the salaries of those employed on a full time basis in cultural institutions represented 39% of the total budget for culture in 2000. This figure decreased to 35% in 2002 and raised to 45.12% in 2005. In 2005, the structure of the cultural budget was: 45.12% for salaries; 2.65% for heating; 0.99% for insurance and other services to the institutions; 2.65% for capital investments (reconstructions, equipment etc.) and 44.24 % for programmes and projects.

In 2020, the share for salaries of those employed on a full time basis in cultural institutions represented 38% of the total budget for culture.

There is no data available for cultural funding of local governments.

Indicators

Table 17: Expenditure for culture and % of state budget 2008-2017

| Year | Ministry of Culture (in million MKD) | Financing of cultural activities (in million MKD) | % for culture in the State Budget |
|------|--------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| 2008 | 501                                  | 2780  | 2.3                               |
| 2009 | 633                                  | 2570  | 2.3                               |
| 2010 | 656                                  | 2359  | 2.1                               |
| 2011 | 280                                  | 3174  | 2.3                               |
| 2012 | 315                                  | 2801  | 2.0                               |
| 2013 | 323                                  | 3288  | 2.3                               |
| 2014 | 337                                  | 3352  | 2.2                               |
| 2015 | 332                                  | 3696  | 2.2                               |
| 2016 | 355                                  | 3460  | 2.1                               |
| 2017 | 359                                  | 4899  | 2.6                               |

Source: National Strategy for Cultural Development in the Republic of North Macedonia 2018-2022

Culture's share of the central state budget in 2020 was 0.16% (0.12% in 2019) which represents almost the lowest percentage in the past 20 years. On the other hand, the increase in the cultural budget for 2020 was almost 47% higher than the budget for 2019.

Table 18: Cultural expenses as part of GDP, at current prices (in million MKD), 2005-2017

| Year         | 2005  | 2006  | 2007  | 2008   | 2009   | 2014   | 2017   |
|--------------|-------|-------|-------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Share of GDP | 6 155 | 7 124 | 7 495 | 10 548 | 13 296 | 13 643 | 14 464 |

Source: State Statistical Office of the Republic of North Macedonia

### 7.1.2. EXPENDITURE ON GOVERNMENT LEVEL

There is no data available on the local (municipal) expenditure on culture. The Ministry of Culture is the main source of funding for culture. It provides annual funding to the national cultural (and local) institutions (salaries, investments, running costs such as heating, insurance of equipment, buildings, exhibits, etc.) and for specific programmes/projects on the basis of competitions. However, within the new re-organisation of the network of public cultural institutions and the re-allocation of some responsibilities to the municipalities, it is believed that this figure will change in the near future.

Table 19: Expenditure for culture and % of state budget 2008-2017

| Year | Ministry of Culture (in million MKD) | Financing of cultural activities (in million MKD) | % for culture in the State Budget |
|------|--------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| 2008 | 501                                  | 2780  | 2.3                               |
| 2009 | 633                                  | 2570  | 2.3                               |
| 2010 | 656                                  | 2359  | 2.1                               |
| 2011 | 280                                  | 3174  | 2.3                               |
| 2012 | 315                                  | 2801  | 2.0                               |
| 2013 | 323                                  | 3288  | 2.3                               |
| 2014 | 337                                  | 3352  | 2.2                               |
| 2015 | 332                                  | 3696  | 2.2                               |
| 2016 | 355                                  | 3460  | 2.1                               |
| 2017 | 359                                  | 4899  | 2.6                               |

Source: National Strategy for Cultural Development in the Republic of Macedonia 2018-2022

Culture's share of the central state budget in 2020 was 0.16% (0.12% in 2019) which represents almost the lowest percentage in the past 20 years. On the other hand, the increase in the cultural budget for 2020 was almost 47% higher than the budget for 2019.

Table 20: Expenditure of the Ministry of Culture, 2004-2013

| Year | value in MKD | % of total | value in MKD per capita | yearly change % |
|------|--------------|------------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| 2004 | 147 102 712  | 0.0        | 73.6                    | 0.0             |
| 2005 | 290 266 224  | 0.1        | 145.1                   | 97.3            |

|      |             |     |       |       |
|------|-------------|-----|-------|-------|
| 2006 | 294 195 937 | 0.1 | 147.1 | 1.4   |
| 2007 | 383 395 250 | 0.1 | 191.7 | 30.3  |
| 2008 | 500 904 760 | 0.1 | 250.5 | 30.6  |
| 2009 | 632 956 949 | 0.2 | 316.5 | 26.4  |
| 2010 | 674 902 000 | 0.2 | 337.5 | 6.6   |
| 2011 | 293 390 000 | 0.1 | 146.7 | -56.5 |
| 2012 | 315 250 000 | 0.1 | 157.6 | 12.5  |
| 2013 | 366 466 000 | 0.1 | 183.2 | 16.2  |

Source: Centre for Economic Analyses, <http://www.mkdbudget.org>.

Table 21: Financing of cultural activities, 2004-2013

| Year | value in MKD  | % of total | value in MKD per capita | yearly change % |
|------|---------------|------------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| 2004 | 1 418 454 179 | 0.4        | 709.2                   | 0.0             |
| 2005 | 1 371 638 021 | 0.4        | 685.8                   | -3.3            |
| 2006 | 1 315 776 161 | 0.4        | 657.9                   | -4.1            |
| 2007 | 1 600 004 690 | 0.5        | 800.0                   | 21.6            |
| 2008 | 2 779 811 936 | 0.8        | 1 389.9                 | 73.7            |
| 2009 | 2 570 277 837 | 0.8        | 1 285.1                 | -7.5            |
| 2010 | 2 511 410 000 | 0.7        | 1 255.7                 | -2.3            |
| 2011 | 3 365 785 000 | 1.0        | 1 682.9                 | 34.0            |
| 2012 | 2 888 830 000 | 0.8        | 1 444.4                 | -9.0            |
| 2013 | 3 399 355 000 | 1.0        | 1 699.7                 | 17.7            |

Source: Centre for Economic Analyses, <http://www.mkdbudget.org>.

Table 20 includes the expenses of the Ministry alone (salaries - including the salaries for the Cultural Heritage Protection Office, subventions and transfers, capital expenses, the fund for the national artist etc.). Table 21 includes the transfers to the institutions or other subjects for financing of their cultural projects according to the annual programme, the salaries and other expenses of the national institutions etc.

The significant disproportions in the Ministry's budget between 2006-07 and 2010-11 is mostly related to the scheduled activities that were "imposed" on the Ministry of Culture, like the "Skopje 2014" project (the building of numerous memorial monuments), publishing projects, temporary archaeological campaigns etc. In practice, very little funds were left for regular cultural activities.

Table 22: Ministry of Culture, total budget and budget for cultural activities, 2019/2020

| Year | Total budget (in MKD) | Budget for the Ministry of Culture | Budget for cultural activities |
|------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2019 | 3 225 879 000         | 204 493 000                        | 3 021 386 000                  |
| 2020 | 3 462 483 000         | 321 583 000                        | 3 140 900 000                  |

Source: Rapport of the Ministry of culture (2019 and 2020)

Table 23: Ministry of Culture, expenditure for cultural activities 2020



|                                     |               |       |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|-------|
| Budget for cultural activities 2020 | 3 140 900 000 | %     |
| Salaries                            | 1 338 800 000 | 42.62 |
| Public services                     | 160 000 000   | 5.09  |
| Block-subsidies                     | 297 000 000   | 9.46  |
| Programmes                          | 980 100 000   | 31.20 |
| Investments                         | 365 000 000   | 11.62 |

Source: Rapport of the Ministry of culture, 2020

Table 23 shows that only 31.20% or 1/3 of the funds for financing cultural programmes and activities actually goes to cultural institutions.

### 7.1.3. EXPENDITURE PER SECTOR

The figures in Table 24 represent the direct budgetary transfers from the Ministry of Culture to the cultural institutions. The Ministry of Culture does not finance the press, the media, the archives etc.

Table 24: Sector breakdown in MKD, 2017 and 2018

| Sector   | 2017          | 2018          |
|--|---------------|---------------|
| Protection of Cultural Heritage                  | 242 651 143   | 441 400 000   |
| Museums  | 398 299 276   | 420 300 000   |
| Visual Arts                                      | 28 803 321    | 37 100 000    |
| Publishing                                       | 162 251 531   | 96 200 000    |
| Libraries  | 86 322 362    | 88 000 000    |
| Film   | 149 874 562   | 159 863 000   |
| Performing Arts                                  | 2 942 608 819 | 1 629 100 000 |
| International co-operation                       | 96 561 818    | 121 169 000   |
| Cultural events, festivals, other manifestations | 93 663 098    | 113 331 000   |
| Decentralisation                                 | 234 335 000   | 249 882 000   |
| TOTAL (MKD)                                      | 4 435 370 930 | 3 235 176 000 |
| TOTAL (EUR)                                      | 72 710 998    | 53 035 672    |

Source: Ministry of Finance 2018.

## 7.2. Support programmes

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

On the state level, cultural creativity is supported - both directly and indirectly:

- support from the budget through annual public calls in all fields of culture (theatre, film, publishing, music etc.) that encompass all the basic cultural activities (creativity, reproduction, transmission etc.) as well as supplementary cultural activities (support for cultural management education, information technology support etc.);

- direct support for cultural institutions;
- grants that directly support artistic creativity (e.g. writing, visual arts);
- payment of retirement and health contributions for independent artists; and
- ad hoc support from the Ministry's reserve of budgetary funds for projects that have already ensured some of the above-mentioned types of support, or have appeared as new projects outside the competition procedure.

A similar type of support is provided only in few municipalities on the local level.

### 7.2.2. ARTIST'S FUNDS

Except for the special fund for independent artists, there are no other special artists' funds provided by the government. However, there is ad hoc government support, especially for the film industry, but without any publicly known or approved criteria. This method has been criticized often by some of the public media in the past decade.

### 7.2.3. GRANTS, AWARDS, SCHOLARSHIPS

Through public competition, the Ministry of Culture supports the professional development of talented young artists and professionals in the area of film, theatre, music, dance, literature, visual arts, and protection of movable and immovable cultural heritage. The priority is given to studies that do not exist within the Macedonian educational system.

Other examples of direct support include: an annual open competition for artists to spend time at Cité International des Arts in Paris, and several state awards ("11th October" Award which is the most important national award; "St. Kliment Award" etc.) given to artists (by public competition) as a recognition for their life-time achievement.

The Ministry of Culture provides funding for the annual awards given by professional artists' associations to their members for special achievements.

In 2008, the Ministry of Culture announced the introduction of a new category / the position of "national artist". The title was reserved for the most significant artists as recognition of their contribution to the development and popularisation of Macedonian art and culture. The *Law on National Artists* was approved in 2011. The title was awarded by the President of the Republic, based on the proposal from the Minister of Culture. The title provides a lifelong monthly payment of 1 000 EUR and a monograph of his / her work to be published by the Ministry of Culture.

Another form of direct support to artists was the "national pension", which was awarded to significant artists and experts in the protection of cultural heritage. The artists and experts who were awarded this lifelong national pension received the difference between their pension and the highest pension in the country.

However, having in mind the actual practice within the last decade, the new Government (2017) determined that these two new categories were a kind of political corruption to the artists and cultural workers enforced by the former government. The Ministry of Culture consequently annulled the laws in 2018.

#### 7.2.4. SUPPORT TO PROFESSIONAL ARTISTS' ASSOCIATIONS OR UNIONS

The Ministry of Culture and Media provides support for the activities of artists' associations or unions in the form of grants and subsidies for their regular activities. The Ministry also approves grants for individual members of these associations or unions to spend time at special artists' centres and various other forms of cooperation - national and international.

Support for professional associations in the audio-visual field is provided through yearly calls by the Film Agency.

There have not been significant changes in recent years.

### 7.3. Private funding

There is no data or information available on private cultural funding in North Macedonia.

## Expert Authors

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