



Country profile **Spain**

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1. Cultural Policy System

1.1 Objectives, main features and background

Objectives

The main objectives of cultural policies implemented by any level of the Spanish public administration are the preservation of cultural heritage and the promotion of access to culture. The differences arise in what is considered cultural heritage (tangible versus intangible; of the state versus identities) and which types of cultural manifestations should be promoted and how access should be granted and financed.

If we analyse recent cultural policies in terms of the cultural policy principles defined by the Council of Europe, we see that promotion of national identity - the main vehicle for articulating cultural policy in the regions, particularly in those having separate language environments - has been exacerbated in recent years.

In terms of recognising diversity, the very way the Spanish state is organised territorially has been an admission of the cultural diversity of the country. Protection of diversity has been mainly interpreted by looking internally at the individual traits of the various cultures comprising modern-day Spain. Since 2000, as a result of the dramatic increase in immigration, recognition of another form of cultural diversity beyond national borders was included in the cultural policy agendas, as part of the social integration of immigrant groups.

Support for cultural creativity has been traditionally articulated as an aim of cultural policy along three main axes: statutory protection of intellectual property; the teaching of creative arts; and specific measures to promote the work of creative artists themselves.

Access to culture and participation in cultural life are among the prime objectives of recent Spanish cultural policy. However, generating demand outside the sphere of mass culture turned out to be a complex issue. Equally, the democratisation of culture, understood as the citizens' right to have their say about how the cultural life of their communities is defined, leaves considerable room for development in the search for a fully rounded Spanish cultural policy.

Main features: Spanish cultural policy has undergone profound and rapid changes since 1977. The cultural model of the democratic period has combined the recognition of cultural pluralism, the determination of the state to foster culture and a massive decentralisation of administrative tools, in accordance with the rules for the territorial government laid down in the Constitution of 1978.¹ This model has also tried to favour an increase in the involvement of private companies and civil society in running the country's culture. The relevance of one characteristic or another has depended on the political party in office and its relationships with regional governments.

¹ Prieto de Pedro, J (2004) *Cultura, culturas y Constitución*. Editorial Centro de Estudios Políticos y Constitucionales. Madrid (second edition).

Traditionally, Spain's decentralised policy has favoured different models for cultural management and for supporting and promoting artistic creation, though much of the funding is ultimately linked to public budgets. Thus, the institutions' economic and operational autonomy could be limited. Sometimes, the creation of arms-length bodies has been encouraged; sometimes, advisory councils have tried to connect cultural policy with relevant cultural stakeholders.

Since the early 1980s, several Spanish autonomous communities have developed advisory and governance bodies in the cultural field. Galicia was an early example with the creation of the Galician Council of Culture (*Act 8/1983*), a statutory advisory institution tasked with promoting and safeguarding Galician cultural values. Shortly afterwards, Navarre established the Navarre Council of Culture as a consultative body linking the administration with the cultural sector (*Foral Decree 241/1984*, regulated by *Foral Decree 86/2020*). In the early 1990s, the Community of Madrid set up the Council of Culture of the Community of Madrid as an advisory and participatory body (*Act 6/1992*). Since 2000, the Basque Country has operated a collegial advisory body for participation and consultation in cultural matters (*Decree 219/2000*, updated by *Decree 19/2023*). Catalonia later created the National Council for Culture and the Arts (*Act 6/2008*), the first arm's-length body of its kind in Spain, subsequently reformed to strengthen its supervisory and advisory functions (*Act 11/2011*). In 2011, Andalusia established the Andalusian Agency for Cultural Institutions through the merger of several arm's-length bodies (*Act 1/2011*; *Decree 103/2011*, amended by *Decree 13/2023*). Similarly, Castile and León created the Council for Cultural Policies as a regional body for participation and coordination in culture, the arts, and cultural heritage (*Decree 26/2012*).

Background

1939-1975: The official culture of Francoism combined fervent nationalism with equally fervent Catholicism. Its artistic predilection was for traditional styles. From the 1960s onwards, rigid press and education policies began to soften.

1977-1982: In 1977, the Ministry of Culture was established and, by means of international exhibitions, congresses, prizes and appointments, much of the cultural heritage silenced by Francoism was recovered, and the work of exiled artists and intellectuals recognised. The Constitution of 1978 and the charters of regional autonomy set up under its aegis initiated a period of freedom of the press and artistic expression, combined with greater state activity in disseminating culture and giving full recognition to the cultural and linguistic diversity of Spain.

1982-1996: Successive Socialist governments emphasised the need for public intervention in areas where private cultural provision was limited. In the initial phase, up to 1986, policy priorities focused on preserving a deteriorated historic and artistic heritage, renovating theatres and auditoriums, and supporting artistic production through public subsidies. At

the same time, the progressive decentralisation of competencies to regional authorities led to a reorganisation and reduction of the central Ministry's role.

In a second phase (1986–1996), cultural policy gained greater public visibility through the organisation of major cultural events. This period was characterised by increased artistic activity and greater freedom of expression, alongside stronger international cultural exchange. However, this expansion also coincided with structural constraints, particularly limited financial resources. While decentralisation contributed to the recovery and strengthening of regional cultural diversity, it did not consistently translate into broader participation in cultural activities or sustained improvements in artistic quality.

1996-2004: Under the liberal-conservative government of the Popular Party, the main lines of ministerial action remained broadly stable, focusing on the protection and dissemination of Spain's historic heritage, the management of major national cultural institutions (museums, archives, and libraries), and the promotion of film, theatre, dance, and music. At the same time, a stronger deregulatory orientation led to increased efforts to involve the private sector in the development and financing of cultural initiatives.

2004-2011: Under successive Socialist governments, the Ministry of Culture underwent several organisational restructurings, with cultural industries emerging as a central policy priority. However, the onset of the economic crisis had a significant impact on the cultural field, leading to the adoption of austerity measures aimed at reducing the public deficit.

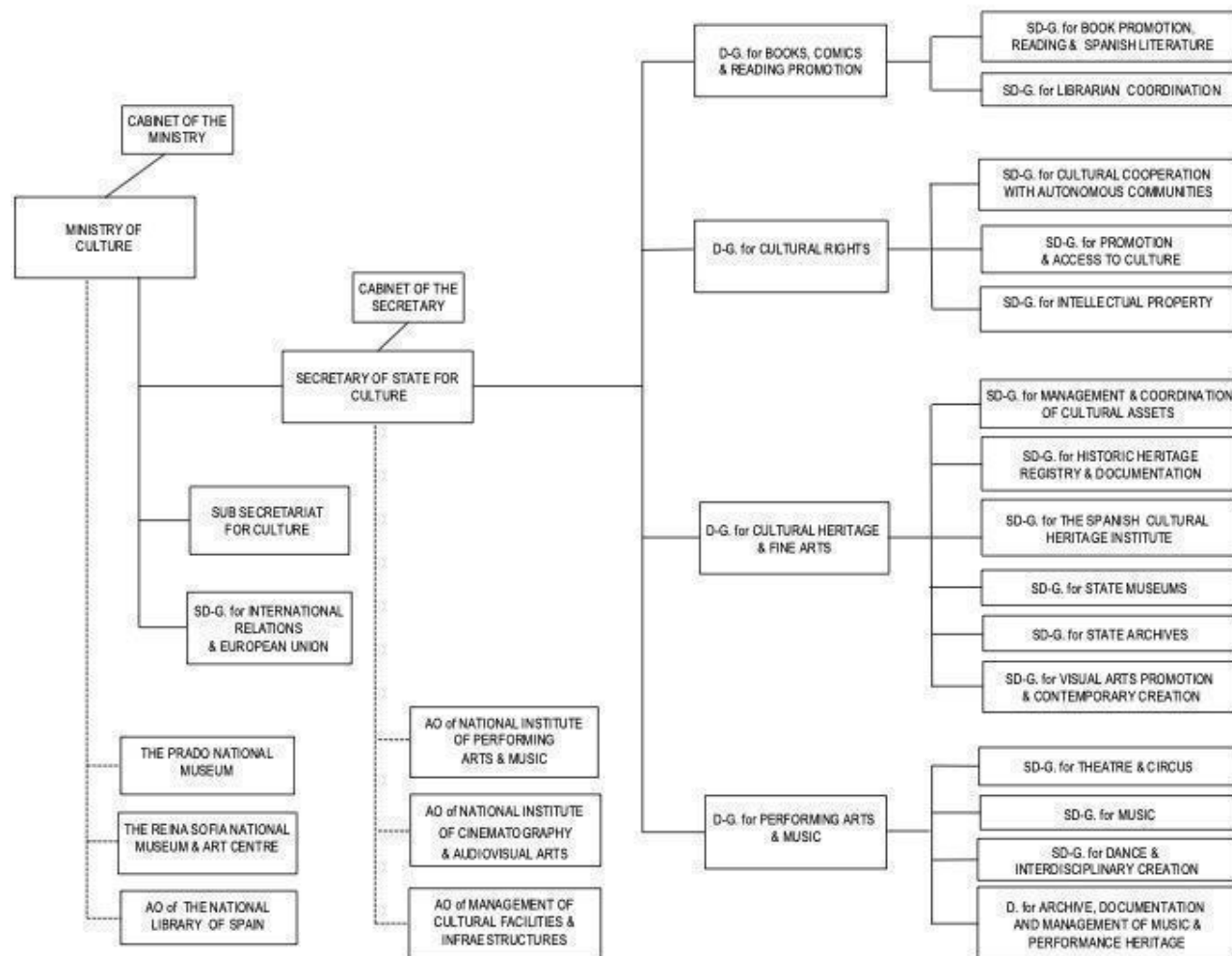
2011-2018: This period was marked by structural adjustments and continued reductions in public funding. Culture and education also became areas of significant political tension between the central government (led by the Popular Party), the Autonomous Communities—particularly those with co-official languages—and actors within the cultural and creative sectors.

2018-2026: The centre-left coalition governments, led by the Socialist Party in partnership first with Unidas Podemos and later Sumar, and supported by regional and nationalist parties, placed renewed emphasis on cultural diversity and access to culture. Key policy initiatives included the introduction of cultural voucher schemes targeting young people, the development and progressive implementation of the Artists' Statute, and the adoption of an ambitious Cultural Rights Plan aimed at safeguarding the rights of cultural workers, artists, and citizens.

1.2 Domestic governance system

1.2.1 Organisational organigram

Central level – Ministry of Culture



D-G: Directorate-General

SD-G: Sub Directorate-General

AO: Autonomous Organisation (self-governing public bodies dependent on the Ministry, in which its director has the rank of General Director)

D: Division

Regional Level - Autonomous Communities

AUTONOMOUS GOVERNMENT	DEPARTMENT	VICE DEPARTMENT	DIRECTORATES
ANDALUSIA	Culture and Sport	Vice Department for Culture and Sport	General Secretariat for of Cultural Innovation and Museums General Secretariat for Cultural and Documental Heritage General Secretariat for Sport Secretariat for Technical Affairs D-G. for Museums and Cultural Compounds D-G. for Innovation and Cultural Promotion D-G. for Cultural Heritage D-G. for Sport Systems and Values D-G. for Events and Sportive Installations
ARAGON	Presidency, Justice and Culture		D-G. for Culture and Cultural Heritage
ASTURIAS	Culture, Linguistic Policy and Sport		Secretariat for Technical Affairs D-G. Cultural Action and Linguistic Normalisation D-G. for Cultural Heritage D-G. for Physical Activity and Sport
BALEARICS	Tourism, Culture and Sports		General Secretariat Autonomic Secretariat for Culture and Sports Consortium School of Hospitality of the Balearic Islands Balearic Studies Institute Balearic Islands Institute for Cultural Industries Balearic Islands Symphonic Orchestra Foundation D-G. for Tourism Balearic Islands Strategic Tourism Agency Foundation for Balearic Sport Robert Graves Foundation
CANARIAS	Universities, Science and Innovation, and Culture	Vice Department of Universities and Research Vice Department of Culture and Cultural Heritage	Secretariat for Technical Affairs D-G. for Ordinance, Innovation and Academic Quality D-G. for Universities and Research D-G. for Cultural Innovation and Creative Industries D-G. for Culture and Cultural Heritage Canarian Agency of Research, Innovation and Information Society
CANTABRIA	Universities, Equality, Culture, and Sport		General Secretariat for Culture, Tourism and Sport D-G. for Culture and Historic Heritage D-G. for Tourism and Hospitality D-G. for Sport
CASTILLE-LEON	Culture, Tourism and Sport	Vice Department of Cultural Action	General Secretariat D-G. for Cultural Heritage D-G. for Cultural Policies D-G. for Tourism

			D-G. for Sports
CASTILLE-LA MANCHA	Education, Culture and Sports	Vice Department of Education, Universities and Research Vice Department of Culture and Sport	Cabinet Office General Secretariat for Education Culture and Sports D-G. for Human Resources D-G. for Inclusive Education and Programmes D-G. for Professional Training D-G for Universities, Research and Innovation D-G. for Educational Innovation and Centres D-G. for Youth and Sports
CATALONIA	Culture		Cabinet Office General Secretariat for Culture D-G. for Cultural Heritage D-G. for Cultural Rights, Creation and Libraries D-G. for Popular Culture and Cultural Associationism D-G. for Innovation and Digital Culture Catalan Literature Institution Catalan Institute for Cultural Enterprises National Council for Culture and the Arts
CEUTA*	Education, Culture and Youth		D-G. for Education D-G. for Cultural Heritage
VALENCIAN COMMUNITY	Education, Culture and Universities		Cabinet Office Autonomic Secretariat for Education Autonomic Secretariat for Culture Autonomic Secretariat for Universities Sub-Secretariat D-G. for Teaching Staff D-G. for Teaching Centres D-G. for Educational Ordinance D-G. for Innovation and Inclusive Education D-G. for Culture D-G. for Culture and Heritage D-G. for Universities D-G. for Science and Research D-G. for Education Infrastructure
EXTREMADURA	Culture, Tourism and Sports		General Secretariat General Secretariat for Culture D-G. for Cultural and Documental Heritage D-G. for Tourism D-G. for Sports
GALICIA	Culture, Language and Youth		Secretariat for Technical Affairs General Secretariat for Language D-G. for Culture D-G. for Cultural Heritage D-G. for Youth
LA RIOJA	Culture, Tourism, Sport and Youth		Secretariat for Technical Affairs D-G. for Culture D-G. for Tourism and Territorial Promotion D-G. for Sport and Youth Riojan Institute for Youth Institute for Riojan Studies

MADRID	Culture, Tourism and Sport	Vice Department of Culture, Tourism and Sport	Secretariat for Technical Affairs D-G. for Cultural Heritage and the Spanish Language Office D-G. for Culture and Creative Industries D-G. for Tourism and Hospitality D-G. for Sport
MELILLA*	Culture, Cultural Heritage and the Elder		Technical Secretariat for Culture, Heritage and the Elder D-G. for Culture and Festivities D-G. for Cultural Heritage
MURCIA	Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sport		General Secretariat for Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sport D-G. for Touristic Quality and Competitiveness D-G. for Cultural Heritage D-G. for Youth D-G. for Sports Institute for Tourism in the Region of Murcia Institute for Cultural Industries and Arts in the Region of Murcia
NAVARRRE	Culture, Sport and Tourism		Secretariat for Technical Affairs D-G. for Culture - Príncipe de Viana Institution D-G. Tourism Navarrese Institute for Sport and Physical Activity
BASQUE COUNTRY	Cultural and Linguistic Policy	Vice Department of Culture Vice Department of Linguistic Policy	Directorate for Cabinet and Social Media Communications Directorate for Services Directorate for Physical Activity and Sport Directorate for Cultural Heritage, Intellectual Property and Legal Deposit Directorate for Cultural Promotion and Cultural and Creative Industries Directorate for Linguistic Normalisation of Public Administrations Directorate for Euskera Promotion Directorate for Linguistic Research and Coordination

Source: Autonomous governments official websites (2026)

*Cities with autonomous status

1.2.2 National authorities

The 1978 Constitution created a new administrative territorial division in Spain, with three administrative levels: central government, Autonomous Communities or Regions and local councils (municipalities and provinces). According to the areas of competence laid down in the Constitution, all three levels have general responsibilities for culture, although the majority of public cultural expenditure comes from regional and local governments, which together represented 83.5% of public cultural spending in 2023 (see chapter 5.1).

The central government holds the exclusive responsibility for protecting cultural property against export, creating legislation to protect copyright, overseeing the basic rules on freedom of expression, creation and communication and regulating the means of communication (radio, television and the press) solely to the extent that such freedoms are threatened. At the same time, it retains the ownership of certain major cultural institutions, such as some museums, archives and libraries, even if their administration is sometimes delegated to the regions.

In November 2025, a new structure of the Ministry of Culture was established (*Royal Decree 1028/2025*) with four Directorates General:

- Directorate-General for Books, Comics and Reading Promotion
- Directorate-General for Cultural Rights
- Directorate-General for Cultural Heritage and Fine Arts
- Directorate-General for Performing Arts and Music

This lean organisational structure is partly explained by the existence of autonomous cultural bodies with independent legal status (public law entities) and a certain degree of operational autonomy. This is the case, for example, of the Prado Museum, the National Library of Spain, and the Institute of Cinematography and Audiovisual Arts.

1.2.3 Regional authorities

At the regional level, Spain is divided into seventeen Autonomous Communities (and two cities with autonomous status), which exercise broad powers in cultural matters. The Constitution grants them both executive and regulatory authority in areas traditionally subject to public intervention, such as museums, libraries, the performing arts, and crafts. National museums, libraries, and archives remain under state ownership; however, in most cases, their day-to-day management has been delegated to the Autonomous Communities.

The involvement of regional governments in cultural affairs has traditionally been greater in those communities with their own language and in the so-called “historic nationalities”, that is, those that first obtained administrative autonomy: Andalusia, the Basque Country, Catalonia, and Galicia (Article 151 of the 1978 Spanish Constitution). At present, only Catalonia has assigned responsibility for cultural affairs to a dedicated department, while the remaining regional governments have opted for mixed structures in which culture is administered jointly with education, tourism, language policy, innovation, and/or sports.

The regions have played an active role in preserving heritage and developing cultural infrastructure. In those regions with their own language, cultural policies often focus on strengthening regional identity, particularly through statutory initiatives aimed at promoting and protecting these languages.

Similar to the national level, regional cultural administrations tend to have relatively lightweight structures. The coexistence of central administrative units and autonomous

agencies is also common, with various regions incorporating autonomous bodies within their departmental frameworks, for example:

- Regional policy on reading and literature promotion in Catalonia is entrusted to an autonomous public body, the Institució de les Lletres Catalanes (Institute of Catalan Literature).
- In Andalusia, the management of cultural programmes is delegated to the Andalusian Agency for Cultural Institutions, an entity governed by public law.
- In Galicia, the Galician Centre of Contemporary Art operates as a key public institution in the field of contemporary culture.
- In the Region of Murcia, policies for the promotion, development, protection, and dissemination of the arts and cultural industries are entrusted to the Institute for Cultural Industries and the Arts.
- In the Valencian Community, the Valencian Institute of Culture is the public body responsible for implementing the regional government's cultural policies, particularly in the fields of the performing arts, music, audiovisual sectors, and cultural heritage.

1.2.4 Local authorities

At the local level, the *Local Regime Act 1985* gave city and town councils administrative powers over local heritage, cultural activities and amenities, and "leisure activities". The law states that population centres of over 5 000 inhabitants are obliged to provide library services, and it allows the municipalities to promote "complementary activities to those provided by other government bodies and, in particular, those concerning culture". In practice, local authorities have almost unlimited power to promote cultural activities at the municipal level. Their proximity to the citizens and the political rewards of such activities explain the huge expansion of local cultural events up to the start of the 1990s. Today, the bulk of public cultural spending (over 60%) is carried out at the local level.

A distinction should be drawn between the bigger cities (Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia, Valladolid, Bilbao, Sevilla, Oviedo, Salamanca, La Coruña, Santiago de Compostela), capable of funding major projects and activities, and the medium-sized and smaller towns, which only provide the basics (libraries) and support patron-saint festivals and other strictly local events.

1.2.5 Main non-governmental actors

A key actor in the provision of cultural services is the non-profit sector, often linked to large financial or industrial corporations. The 2008 financial crisis significantly altered private-sector funding for culture, as many Cajas de Ahorro (savings banks) ceased to operate. Nevertheless, institutions such as Fundación "la Caixa", Fundación BBVA, Fundación Mapfre, and Fundación Ramón Areces continue to implement funding programmes to support cultural activities and, in some cases, manage their own cultural centres.

There are currently eight collective management organisations authorised by the Spanish Ministry to manage usage and related rights on behalf of, and in the interest of, authors and other intellectual property rights holders: the Spanish Society of Authors, Composers and Publishers (SGAE); the Spanish Reproduction Rights Centre (CEDRO); the Association for the Management of Intellectual Property Rights (AGEDI); the Artists and Performers Society of Spain (AIE); the Visual Management Entity of Plastic Artists (VEGAP); the Audiovisual Producers' Rights Management Association (EGEDA); the Artists and Performers Management Society (AISGE); and the Audiovisual Authors' Rights Management Entity (DAMA).

In 2024, entities managing intellectual property rights collected 630 million euros, of which 420 million euros were distributed to rights holders. The main rights management entities were SGAE (58.5%), AIE (15.1%), and VEGAP (1.6%). Rights organisations had a total of 244,027 members, with significant differences in gender representation and organisational distribution.

Professional organisations play a key role in promoting the cultural and creative industries and in safeguarding authors' rights. In recent years, several organisations have been active in advocating for artistic and cultural rights, including:

- the *Spanish Federation of Associations of Cultural Managers*, founded in 1999, represents cultural management professionals through a network of regional associations. It aims to strengthen the profession, foster knowledge exchange, and contribute to the development of cultural policies in Spain. The federation has also promoted collective advocacy initiatives, including the Pacts for Culture of 2010 and 2015;
- the *Spanish Association of Women Filmmakers and Audiovisual Media Professionals*, founded in 2006, works to promote the equal participation of women in the audiovisual sector;
- the *Coalition of Creators and Content Industries*, founded in 2008, is an umbrella organisation representing authors, performers and cultural industries. It advocates for the protection of intellectual property rights and supports measures to combat copyright infringement and online piracy in digital environments.

1.2.6 Transversal co-operation

To foster a cross-cutting approach within the cultural field, a number of collegiate bodies have been established through which different levels of public administration—as well as different departments within the same level—cooperate.

Traditional *inter-ministerial cooperation* initiatives include the “1% Cultural Programme”, funded through allocations from major public works, whereby a minimum percentage of infrastructure investment (originally 1%, later raised to 1.5% and currently set up to 2% under updated regulations since 2021) is reserved for the conservation, restoration, and

enhancement of Spanish cultural heritage, as well as for supporting artistic creation, under the framework of the *Spanish Historical Heritage Act (Act 16/1985)*. The programme is jointly coordinated between the Ministry of Culture and the state infrastructure ministry (currently the Ministry of Transport and Sustainable Mobility, with participation from the Ministry of Housing and Urban Agenda where relevant), through inter-ministerial mechanisms that support the identification, selection, and financing of heritage-related interventions linked to public investment projects.

There are also numerous and diverse inter-ministerial bodies and initiatives. For example:

- The Ministries of Culture and Labour have promoted a 'Social Economy Agenda for Culture', aimed at strengthening cultural cooperatives and worker-owned companies.
- The Ministries of Culture and the Interior have reached an agreement to promote culture as a tool for intervention within the prison system.
- The Ministry of Culture and Correos have signed an agreement to support local independent bookshops, with the aim of improving their competitiveness by boosting online sales and expanding distribution networks.

In terms of *intergovernmental co-operation*, the State is constitutionally mandated to promote cultural communication among the different regions "in collaboration with them." To this end, the central government has established a dedicated unit, currently titled the Sub-Directorate General for Cultural Cooperation with the Autonomous Communities, within the Directorate-General for Cultural Rights of the Ministry of Culture. The unit's tasks include cooperating with the regions on their cultural programmes; fostering interregional communication in this field; promoting awareness of the richness and diversity of regional cultural heritage; and facilitating the exchange of information on cultural policies. It is also responsible for ensuring that the cultural diversity of Spain's regions is promoted internationally, a task carried out in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation, as well as Spanish embassies and consulates worldwide.

In practice, the mechanisms for coordinating central and regional government activities in cultural matters have operated with varying degrees of effectiveness. The Plenary Session of the Sectoral Conference on Culture met once during the third legislature (1986–1989), twice during both the fourth (1989–1993) and fifth (1993–1996) legislatures, and did not meet during the sixth and seventh legislatures (1996–2004). It met eight times during the eighth legislature (2004–2008), nine times during the ninth legislature (2008–2011), and seven times during the tenth legislature (December 2011–December 2015). The Plenary Session did not meet during the eleventh legislature (December 2015–July 2016), met once during the twelfth (July 2016–June 2018) and thirteenth (June 2018–November 2019) legislatures, and six times during both the fourteenth (December 2019–July 2023) and the current fifteenth legislature (August 2023–present). The latest Sectoral Conference took place in April 2026, during which a transfer of 14.5 million euros was approved for all Autonomous Communities, as well as Ceuta and Melilla.

Recovering and preserving national heritage is the area in which coordinated action by different levels of government has proven most effective. Since the early 1990s, there has been a proliferation of cooperation agreements across levels of government, particularly in relation to major urban development projects linked to the construction or rehabilitation of emblematic cultural sites. One illustrative example is the Council of St. James, established in 2001 as a cooperation body to facilitate coordination between the central administration and the participating Autonomous Communities (Aragon, Asturias, the Basque Country, Cantabria, Castile and León, Catalonia, Galicia, La Rioja, and Navarre).

Beyond the heritage field, and within the framework of the Sectoral Conference of Culture, several working groups have been created, bringing together representatives of the central administration and the Autonomous Communities. These groups aim to promote communication and cooperation in a range of areas, including cinematography and audiovisual policy, video games, musical heritage, and other cultural domains.

As for *relations among the regions themselves*, the level of information and technical exchange is extremely low, with the exception of the historic communities. Collaboration between Catalonia and the Basque Country has materialised over the years in numerous projects and the exchange of information and experiences on their cultural policies. In recent years, the Departments of Culture of these communities, together with Occitanie Pyrénées-Méditerranée, have collaborated within the *ARTIS+ programme*, which aims to improve inclusion and accessibility in cultural facilities across the cross-border area through initiatives targeting groups at higher risk of exclusion due to disability or social factors.

Similarly, very little progress has been made in inter-regional and national-regional coordination to project Spanish culture internationally. The notable exception has been the Ramon Llull Institute, a public body to promote Catalan language and culture abroad.

In terms of *cooperation at the municipal level*, aside from the above-mentioned examples involving central and regional government and the councils of certain cities, mention should also be made of the assistance provided by certain regional governments for local townships. For example, the Island Councils of the Canaries and the Provincial Councils of some regions, mainly the Basque Country and Catalonia, have contributed to the development of inter-municipal cultural activities through museums, libraries, archives and local theatre tours. Municipal culture departments have also worked together with their colleagues responsible for urban development, education or tourism.

Since the Agenda 21 for Culture was approved on 8 May 2004, a growing number of Spanish cities and municipalities have adopted it at local government level. To promote the principles enshrined in the document, the United Cities and Local Governments established a Working Group on Culture, which is chaired by the Councillor for Culture of the Barcelona City Council. The Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces also has a Commission on Culture to provide local governments with useful planning and evaluation tools.

1.3 Cultural institutions

1.3.1 Overview of cultural institutions

Spain's leading cultural institutions can be divided into three groups depending on their origins: national institutions, institutions set up by civil society, and institutions that emerged during the period of restored democracy. National institutions have been linked to the central government from the outset, and most of them are in Madrid (Prado Museum, Royal Theatre, National Library of Spain, etc.). The second type can usually be traced to the cultural aspirations of the cultural elites at specific moments in history, particularly in those cities having a strong industrial base, for example, Barcelona, Bilbao, Oviedo, etc. Lastly, there are numerous public initiatives undertaken over the last 30 years by various levels of government, such as the construction of several major cultural spaces, the majority outside Madrid, thereby promoting cultural decentralisation. Some of those cultural facilities, promoted before the deep financial crisis without any feasibility study, remain inconclusive or without cultural activity.

National institutions depend nearly entirely on the central government for funding, although boards of governors are allowed considerable leeway in decision-making. A significant number of the other cultural institutions in the country are financed and self-managed under agreements between different levels of government. This inter-institutional co-operation seeks to promote coherence in regional development strategies and, indirectly, encourages greater self-management in the day-to-day running of the institutions.

1.3.2 Data on selected public and private cultural institutions

Data on cultural institutions have been taken from the *Cultural Statistics Yearbook* published by the Ministry of Culture. Although it was not always possible to distinguish between public and private ownership, as shown in Table 1, the general trend in recent years has been an increase in cultural institutions. The most significant growth occurred in concert venues, which increased by 150.5% between 2019 and 2024 (from 541 to 1 355). This was followed by film festivals and dance festivals, which grew by 66.7% (from 36 to 60) and 60.8% (from 390 to 627), respectively, over the same period. Growth was also observed in music schools, academies and universities, which increased by 36.2% (from 1 446 to 1 996).

At the lower extreme, libraries experienced a decrease of 14% between 2019 and 2024.

Table 1: Cultural institutions financed by public authorities, by domain, 2019-2024

Domain	Arts and heritage institutions (subdomains)	Number (year)	Trend last 5 years (%)
Cultural heritage	Cultural heritage sites (recognized)	17 199 (2019) 18 537 (2024)	7.8%
	Museums (organisations)	1 461 (2018) 1 506 (2024)	3.1%
	Archives (of public authorities)	35 (2019) 37 (2024)	5.7%
Visual arts	Public art galleries / exhibition halls	na	na
	Art academies (or universities)	na	na
Performing arts	Symphonic orchestras, choirs, bands, etc.	4 663 (2019) 5 286 (2024)	13.4%
	Music festivals and other activities	1 567 (2019) 1 508 (2024)	-3.8%
	Music schools, academies and universities	1 466 (2019) 1 996 (2024)	36.2%
	Concert houses	541 (2019) 1355 (2024)	150.5%
	Stable theatre spaces	1709 (2019) 1786 (2024)	4.5%
	Theatre companies	4252 (2019) 4721 (2024)	11%
	Theatre festivals	776 (2019) 916 (2024)	18%
	Dance and ballet companies	917 (2019) 1170 (2024)	27.6%
	Dance festivals	390 (2019) 627 (2024)	60.8%
	Dance academies	791 (2019) 1071 (2024)	35.4%
Books and Libraries	Libraries	6458 (2018) 5552 (2024)	-14%
	Publishers	3170 (2019) 3158 (2024)	-0.4%
Audiovisual	Broadcasting organisations	na	Na
	Cinemas	4459 (2019) 4300 (2024)	-3.6%
	Film production companies	381 (2019) 561 (2024)	47.2%
	Film distribution companies	293 (2019) 317 (2024)	8.2%
	Film festivals	36 (2019) 60 (2024)	66.7%
Interdisciplinary	Socio-cultural centres / cultural houses	na	Na
Other (please explain)	Bullfighting festivals	1425 (2019)	2.2%
		1457 (2024)	

Source: Ministry of Culture (several years) *Cultural Statistics Yearbook*.

Note: na means data not available.

1.3.3 Public cultural institutions: trends and strategies

In recent years, the outsourcing of public services has extended to the governance and management of cultural organisations. The management of both new and existing cultural services, previously under direct governmental control, has progressively been delegated to external companies and organisations. This trend forms part of a broader shift towards the externalisation of public services.

In the cultural sector, this process initially involved the creation of public contractors—such as public cultural foundations, committees and specialised public companies—to streamline administrative procedures and increase flexibility in subcontracting and income management. At the same time, secondary services with limited cultural impact—including catering, security, cleaning and commercial activities—were widely outsourced. Over time, factors such as constraints on public staffing, the demand for specialised services at competitive costs, and the weakening of traditional links between public ownership and public management have encouraged the outsourcing of an increasing number of functions within cultural administration.

In a first phase, publicly owned cultural institutions outsourced support services with significant cultural content, such as educational and mediation activities, which are now commonly provided by external operators in museums and exhibition centres. Subsequently, the process has expanded to include the full transfer of management responsibilities. Today, outsourcing extends to a wide range of facilities, including community centres, municipal arts centres, galleries, exhibition halls, archaeological sites, concert halls, theatres and, in some cases, museums.

At the same time, various national and regional institutions have reformed the procedures for appointing directors, with the aim of improving transparency, professionalism and objectivity. At the central level, initiatives first implemented at the Prado Museum were later extended to other leading institutions, such as the Reina Sofía National Museum and Art Centre and the National Library of Spain.

These reforms were initially promoted within the framework of the *Cultural Institutions Modernisation Plan* (approved in September 2007) and were subsequently reinforced through the *General Strategic Plan 2012–2015* of the State Secretariat for Culture. Together, these initiatives sought to increase the managerial autonomy of major cultural institutions while enhancing their financial sustainability through expanded public–private collaboration. Notably, institutions such as the Prado Museum and the Reina Sofía National Museum and Art Centre have been granted a special status that allows them, within Spain’s legal framework, to operate under certain private-law arrangements.

In this context, sponsorship and fundraising—closely linked to greater institutional autonomy—have encouraged stronger collaboration with the private sector and enabled

cultural institutions to adopt more innovative management practices². A representative example is the Barcelona Museum of Contemporary Art (MACBA).

More recently, forms of civic engagement such as volunteerism have become increasingly prominent across cultural institutions. Initiatives such as Friends of Museums associations, grouped within the Spanish Federation of Friends of Museums (established in 1983), have contributed to strengthening connections between institutions and society. Similar initiatives include the Foundation of Friends of the National Library (established in 2009) and the Foundation of Friends of the Prado Museum, which has more than 21,000 members. In addition, the Prado Museum's patron programme currently accounts for approximately 30% of its internal funding.

1.4 International cooperation

1.4.1 Public actors and cultural diplomacy

The promotion of Spanish culture abroad is a joint endeavour between the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation. Within the Ministry of Culture, the Subdirectorate-General for International Relations and the European Union is responsible for coordination, management, and advisory functions in the field of international cultural relations and technical cooperation.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation is responsible for Spain's external cultural action through its State Secretariat for International Development Cooperation and for Ibero-America, the Caribbean and Spanish in the World. Within this framework, the *Spanish Agency for International Co-operation and Development* (AECID) oversees cultural and scientific exchanges, including grants and scholarships, and manages Spain's international commitments in these areas. AECID operates through Spanish embassies and consulates, as well as through its network of cultural centres abroad.

The *Cervantes Institute*, established in 1991 as an autonomous public body under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is responsible for promoting the Spanish language and culture internationally. It operates through a network of 100 centres in 54 countries.

The *Spanish Public Agency for Cultural Action* (AC/E), established in 2010, promotes and disseminates Spanish culture both domestically and internationally, supports joint initiatives involving regional and national cultural institutions, and fosters the international presence of artists, scientists and cultural and creative industries. Since 2013, it has implemented the Programme for the Internationalisation of Spanish Culture (PICE).

The governance of Spain's external cultural policy has traditionally involved a degree of institutional overlap between the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This

² For more details, see: Rubio-Arostegui, J. A., & Villarroya, A. (2022). Patronage as a way out of crisis? the case of major cultural institutions in Spain. *Cultural Trends*, 31(4), 372–391. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09548963.2021.1986670>

was addressed in July 2009 through an agreement to establish the National Plan for Cultural Action Abroad (PACE), aimed at improving coordination.

At present, the Subdirectorate-General for International Relations and the European Union is responsible for drafting and coordinating the Ministry of Culture's international strategy and for promoting Spanish culture abroad, in coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the relevant policy departments.

At the end of 2024, the Ministry of Culture outlined the main priorities of its forthcoming *Strategic Plan for External Cultural Action (2025–2028)*. The Plan aims to strengthen the international projection of Spanish culture and heritage by promoting cultural rights as a global public good, reinforcing cultural diplomacy as a tool for peace, and supporting the internationalisation of the cultural and creative industries.

Cultural activities abroad are also supported by a range of public and semi-public institutions, including:

- the *Carolina Foundation* (established in 2000), which promotes cultural and academic exchanges—particularly with the Ibero-American community—through grants, research and mobility programmes;
- *Casa de América* (Madrid, established in 1990), which fosters dialogue and cooperation between Spain and Latin America;
- the *Euro-Arab Foundation for Higher Studies* (Granada, established in 1995), which promotes cooperation between the European Union and the League of Arab States;
- the *European Institute of the Mediterranean* (established in 1989), which supports cooperation initiatives and promotes institutional relations in the Mediterranean area;
- *Casa Asia* (Barcelona, established in 2001; Madrid office opened in 2007), which promotes relations between Spain and countries in Asia and the Pacific across institutional, economic, academic and cultural fields;
- *Casa África* (Las Palmas, established in 2006), which fosters dialogue and cooperation between Spain and African partners;
- *Casa Árabe* (established in 2006, with centres in Madrid and Córdoba), which promotes knowledge and engagement with Arab and Muslim countries;
- *Casa Sefarad-Israel* (established in 2006), which promotes knowledge of Jewish culture and relations between Spanish and Israeli societies;
- *Casa Mediterráneo* (established in 2009), which serves as a platform for dialogue and cultural exchange in the Mediterranean region.

From a budgetary perspective, state policy for cultural promotion abroad is mainly implemented through the programme *Cultural Diffusion Abroad*. In 2024, this programme amounted to 153 047 000 euro, representing 11% of total public cultural expenditure. Since 2020, funding has increased by 37%.

Recent initiatives include *Mostra Espanha 2026* (a biennial festival of Spanish culture in

Portugal), *España-Portugal: 50 años de democracia*, and *Cultura para la Paz – España-Palestina* (developed in collaboration with the Palestinian Embassy in Spain).

The international promotion of cultural industries includes Spain's participation as a guest country at book fairs in Latin America, as well as its role as guest of honour at the Angoulême International Comics Festival (France) in 2025. Spain was also the "Focus Country" at the Berlinale in 2025 and participated in the Cannes Film Market and the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF).

In 2026, the Ministry of Culture signed two Memoranda of Understanding with Brazil to promote cooperation in the ecological transition of cultural and heritage institutions, cultural rights, the protection of cultural workers and the development of cultural industries. These agreements were announced at the first Spain-Brazil Summit in Barcelona.

At the regional level, autonomous communities have expanded their international cultural activities in recent years. Early initiatives include the Catalan Consortium for the External Promotion of Culture (established in 1992, now integrated into the Catalan Institute of Cultural Enterprises) and the Etxepare Basque Institute (established in 2007).

More broadly, regions with strong diasporic ties, such as Galicia, promote cultural exchanges, particularly in music and dance. Border regions engage in cross-border cooperation within European Union frameworks, while Andalusia prioritises cultural relations with Morocco. Increasingly, regional governments use cultural diplomacy as a strategic tool to support trade and tourism.

1.4.2 European / international actors and programmes

Spain has been a member of the European Union since 1986. Within this framework, the Subdirectorate-General for International Relations and the European Union performs key coordination functions, including the monitoring of the Ministry of Culture's activities related to the European Union and other international organisations in the field of culture; participation in the preparation of international treaties, conventions and cooperation programmes; and the provision of advisory services regarding Spain's involvement in international cultural organisations.

Spain actively participates in major European Union funding programmes, including Creative Europe and Horizon Europe (2021–2027), as well as Erasmus+ and other cooperation initiatives that promote cultural exchange, mobility and innovation. Spain also participates in the EEA and Norway Grants mechanisms, particularly in areas related to cultural and natural heritage, social inclusion, and cultural diversity.

With regard to the Council of Europe, of which Spain has been a member since 1977, the Subdirectorate-General for International Cooperation, in coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation, is responsible for coordinating and supporting Spain's participation in Council activities. Spain joined the Faro Convention in December 2018.

Spanish institutions participate in around 30 certified *Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe*, including the Ways of Santiago de Compostela, the European Routes of Jewish Heritage, the European Route of Industrial Heritage, Iter Vitis, and the Routes of the Olive Tree, among others.

Spain's cultural cooperation with UNESCO, of which it has been a member since 1953, involves coordination and representation functions, including liaison between national authorities and UNESCO bodies, participation in intergovernmental processes, and cooperation with the Spanish National Commission for UNESCO.

The Ministry of Culture is responsible for implementing the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, ratified by Spain in December 2006. Reflecting this commitment, Spain was selected to host MONDIACULT 2025.

Within the Organisation of Ibero-American States for Education, Science and Culture (OEI), of which Spain has been a member since 1949, the Ministry of Culture coordinates participation in the Ibero-American Conferences of Ministers of Culture.

Cooperation with the OEI is structured through sectoral programmes, including: ABINIA, IBERARCHIVOS-ADAI and RILVI (archives and libraries); IBERMEDIA (audiovisual sector); IBERMÚSICAS and IBERORQUESTAS JUVENILES (music); IBERMUSEOS (heritage and museums); FIPI (intellectual property); IBERESCENA (performing arts); and IBERBIBLIOTECAS (libraries).

Spain is also a signatory to the Andrés Bello Agreement (since 1982), which promotes cooperation in education, science and culture across Ibero-America. In addition, Spain is a member of (CERLALC), an intergovernmental organisation affiliated with UNESCO that supports reading and publishing policies in Latin America and the Caribbean.

1.4.3 NGO's and direct professional cooperation

Over the past decade, partly as a result of the increasing professionalisation of the cultural sector and the impact of successive economic crises on public finances in Spain, cultural institutions have strengthened their engagement with international cooperation networks. In the European context, they have also expanded their participation in collaborative projects funded through EU programmes, particularly *Creative Europe*, *Horizon* and *Erasmus+*, which support a wide range of transnational cultural initiatives.

Spain maintains a strong presence in European and international cooperation networks across culture, heritage, museums, libraries and the arts. Spanish institutions and professionals participate in organisations such as the Network of European Museum Organisations (NEMO), the European Concert Hall Organisation (ECHO), the European Festivals Association (EFA), Eurozine, the European Network for Opera, Music Theatre and Dance Education (RESEO), the European Network on Cultural Management and Policy (ENCATC), and the European Bureau of Library, Information and Documentation Associations (EBLIDA). This engagement extends to pan-European platforms such as Europa

Nostra and Culture Action Europe, as well as to digital and heritage infrastructures such as Europeana.

At the institutional level, the Reina Sofía National Museum and Art Centre (MNCARS) provides a representative example of innovative museum practice through its engagement with non-conventional and transnational networks. Initiatives such as *Red Conceptualismos del Sur* promote decentralised approaches to heritage through shared archival practices, while collaborations with the *Fundación de los Comunes* contribute to the development of participatory and experimental models of cultural governance. Within the European context, MNCARS is a member of *L'Internationale*, a transnational museum network that promotes decentralised and non-hierarchical collaboration based on horizontal exchange and cultural diversity, in close connection with academic and research institutions.

More broadly, Spanish cultural institutions increasingly engage in European initiatives focused on cultural democracy, digital heritage and collaborative innovation. These initiatives—often supported by EU programmes—emphasise participatory governance, audience engagement and cross-sectoral cooperation. In the performing arts, transnational networks continue to support mobility and intercultural dialogue, reflecting broader trends towards increasingly collaborative and internationally connected cultural ecosystems.

2. Current Cultural Affairs

2.1 Key developments

The political shift marked by the Socialist Party's rise to power in June 2018 introduced a renewed emphasis on cultural diversity within Spain's policy agenda. Early initiatives included the advancement of proposals related to the *Artist's Statute* [Estatuto del Artista], the development of new heritage legislation, the promotion of co-official languages, and reforms to the National Institute of Performing Arts and Music (INAEM).

The COVID-19 pandemic (2020–2021) had a profound impact on the cultural sector, leading to prolonged closures of cultural institutions and significant disruptions to cultural production and participation³. At the European level, the response took the form of the NextGenerationEU recovery package, designed to support economic recovery while accelerating ecological and digital transitions. Through the Recovery and Resilience Facility, Spain's *Recovery, Transformation and Resilience Plan* (PRTR) was allocated approximately 163 billion euro for the period 2021–2026. The Plan combines reforms and investments and has evolved progressively, from emergency recovery measures in 2021 to targeted support for the audiovisual sector and digitalisation (2022–2023), and more recently to issues related to cultural rights, artificial intelligence, and long-term post-pandemic stabilisation (from 2024 onwards).

The post-pandemic period has also been characterised by persistent socio-economic pressures, including inflation and rising living costs, alongside increasing political and social polarisation. The spread of misinformation and hate speech through digital platforms has contributed to the normalisation of exclusionary discourses, often framed within broader "culture wars". In Spain, these dynamics have intersected with renewed public debates on historical memory, particularly in relation to the Civil War and the Franco dictatorship.

In response, civil society actors and public institutions have reinforced democratic memory policies. Notable measures include the exhumation of Francisco Franco (2019) and José Antonio Primo de Rivera (2023), as well as initiatives to transform the former Valle de los Caídos into Valle de Cuelgamuros as a site of democratic remembrance. These actions aim to address historical revisionism and promote democratic values and intergenerational justice. Public debate has also intensified around the implementation of the *2022 Democratic Memory Act* and its implications.

Environmental challenges have increasingly intersected with cultural policy agendas. While political responses remain diverse, recent initiatives have promoted more integrated approaches linking culture, sustainability and resilience. The response to the 2024 DANA floods in Valencia, including cultural reconstruction measures supporting affected workers

³ Murciano, M. & Saavedra, C. G. (2021) 'Industrias creativas y culturales en España: efectos de la COVID-19 sobre la economía y el empleo cultural'. Monograma. *Revista Iberoamericana de Cultura y Pensamiento*, n.º 9, pp. 187-210. https://ddd.uab.cat/pub/artpub/2021/249220/monrevibe_a2021n9p187.pdf

and institutions, illustrates the growing recognition of culture within broader sustainability frameworks aligned with the United Nations 2030 Agenda and UNESCO priorities. Spain has also supported international efforts to strengthen the role of culture in global development debates, including those linked to MONDIACULT 2025.

Finally, technological transformation, particularly the rise of generative artificial intelligence, has created new challenges for cultural production and creative labour. Concerns regarding intellectual property, artistic authenticity and working conditions reflect broader uncertainties about the future of cultural work. In this context, the *Artists' Statute* remains a central policy instrument aimed at improving working conditions and strengthening the social protection of cultural professionals.

2.2 Cultural rights and ethics

In recent years, cultural rights have gained increasing prominence within Spain's cultural policy agenda, particularly in relation to territorial inequalities, freedom of expression and democratic values. One key area of concern has been access to culture in rural areas. Demographic trends—especially ageing and depopulation—have disproportionately affected these regions, prompting targeted policy responses. Initiatives such as the *Culture and Rural Environment Forums*, implemented within the *Culture and Citizenship Programme*, aim to promote reflection, professional exchange and the dissemination of innovative practices that enhance cultural participation in rural contexts. These initiatives recognise culture as a driver of social cohesion, identity formation and quality of life.

At the same time, debates on cultural rights have intensified in response to tensions between freedom of expression and censorship. High-profile incidents in 2018, affecting contemporary art exhibitions, music and publishing, triggered national debate and mobilisation within the cultural sector, including public statements by professional associations opposing censorship. These controversies have re-emerged in recent years within broader “culture wars”, particularly following the 2023 elections, when shifts in political power at regional and local levels led to measures affecting cultural diversity, linguistic rights and artistic expression⁴.

In this context of increasing ideological polarisation and the spread of misinformation and hate speech, cultural rights have been framed as a central pillar of democratic governance. Public policies increasingly emphasise the protection of pluralism, artistic freedom and cultural diversity. This trend is reflected in actions related to democratic memory, including the resignification of contested heritage sites and the implementation of the *2022 Democratic Memory Act*.

⁴ Rius-Ulldemolins, J., Rubio-Arostegui, J. A., & Pecourt Gracia, J. (2025). Nativist nationalism, cultural homogenisation and bullfighting: VOX's cultural policy as an instrument for cultural battle (2019–2023). *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 31(1), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10286632.2024.2320424>

The *Cultural Rights Plan 2025–2030* represents a significant milestone in this development. It positions culture as a fundamental human right and a collective good, grounded in principles of democracy, social justice and social transformation. Developed through a participatory process involving public institutions, cultural actors and civil society, the Plan establishes five strategic priorities: strengthening cultural democracy; addressing contemporary social challenges through culture; enhancing the sustainability and independence of the cultural ecosystem; consolidating cultural rights as a transversal framework; and reinforcing institutional capacity.

These priorities reflect a shift towards more integrated and cross-sectoral cultural policies, linking culture with areas such as equality, sustainability, health, digital transformation and territorial cohesion. This approach is aligned with international frameworks, including the United Nations 2030 Agenda and UNESCO cultural policy recommendations, and has been reinforced by Spain's role in hosting MONDIACULT 2025.

Emerging challenges further shape this policy landscape. The climate crisis has highlighted the role of culture in resilience and reconstruction, as illustrated by the 2024 emergency plan for the cultural sector in Valencia following severe flooding. In parallel, technological transformations—particularly the expansion of generative artificial intelligence—raise new ethical concerns regarding authorship, labour conditions and cultural value. High levels of public concern about the impact of these technologies on artistic work underscore the need for updated regulatory frameworks and policy responses.

At the regional level, legislative and policy developments reinforce the growing recognition of cultural rights within Spain's multi-level governance system. Autonomous communities have increasingly adopted legal and strategic approaches centred on access, inclusion and participation. Recent examples include Galicia, where the regional government approved *3/2024 of 5 December on Inclusive and Accessible Culture Act*, which promotes access to culture from an inclusive perspective, with particular attention to groups at risk of cultural exclusion. In the Basque Country, the regional government has adopted the *Strategic Plan for Culture 2028* and is developing draft legislation aimed at establishing a comprehensive cultural system in Euskadi.

These initiatives build on earlier precedents, such as *Navarre's Regional Act 1/2019 on Cultural Rights*, developed through a participatory process involving public authorities, cultural actors and civil society. Similarly, the Canary Islands approved *Act 1/2023*, which frames the protection and promotion of cultural rights within an integrated institutional framework. In Catalonia, the *Draft Law on Cultural Rights* is currently under parliamentary debate, reflecting the continued development of this policy area.

Taken together, these initiatives illustrate the progressive institutionalisation of cultural rights across Spain and highlight the role of regional governments as key actors in advancing more inclusive cultural policies.

2.3 Role of artists and cultural professionals

In recent years, artists and cultural professionals in Spain have faced persistent challenges, including precarious working conditions, economic instability, concerns related to intellectual property and, more recently, debates on artistic freedom. These issues have generated sustained discussion within the sector and prompted collective responses from professional organisations advocating improved working conditions and stronger recognition of cultural rights.

In response, the *Artist's Statute* has emerged as a central policy initiative aimed at adapting institutional and regulatory frameworks to the specific characteristics of cultural labour. Developed through a multi-level and interministerial process coordinated by the Ministry of Culture, the initiative seeks to address the structural conditions affecting cultural workers and to recognise the distinctive features of artistic and creative professions.

Recent reforms have focused on improving employment conditions and strengthening social protection mechanisms, taking into account the intermittent and often unstable nature of cultural work. Measures have sought to support more stable employment trajectories, extend protection to a broader range of cultural professionals, and improve social security coverage adapted to irregular work patterns. These developments also reflect a more participatory policy-making process, based on dialogue between public institutions and cultural stakeholders.

The ongoing development of the Statute addresses several key areas, including labour conditions, taxation adapted to income volatility, social protection for self-employed workers, artistic education and the recognition of professional rights. Increasing attention is also being given to emerging forms of cultural labour in digital environments and evolving professional practices within the cultural and creative industries.

Despite these advances, significant challenges remain. The rapid expansion of generative artificial intelligence has raised ethical, legal and economic concerns regarding authorship, remuneration and the potential impact of automation on creative work. In this context, public debate has increasingly focused on the need to establish safeguards that protect creators while supporting innovation and technological development. Reflecting these concerns, in 2024 the Ministry of Culture adopted a *Guide to Good Practices on Artificial Intelligence*, which provides recommendations for the use of AI in cultural awards, grants and public procurement. The guide emphasizes transparency, respect for intellectual property rights and human oversight, and recommends that works created entirely by generative AI should not be eligible for National Awards, while allowing AI to be used as a supporting tool within creative processes.

2.4 Digital policy and developments

Spanish cultural policy in the field of digital culture has evolved from an initial focus on content industries and intellectual property protection towards a broader framework centred on digital transformation, innovation and creative ecosystems. Current approaches emphasise access, experimentation and the integration of culture within wider digital economy strategies.

Public policy combines support for digital cultural production with initiatives to expand access and strengthen infrastructures. Programmes such as eBiblio, which provides free access to digital reading materials through public libraries, illustrate the growing role of digital services in widening cultural participation. Earlier measures focused on combating piracy and promoting legal access to content; these have progressively evolved into more comprehensive strategies aimed at supporting sustainable digital markets, digital literacy and user engagement.

Support for digital creativity increasingly operates through collaborative spaces and innovation centres. Established initiatives such as *ArtFutura* and *OFFF Barcelona* remain important reference points connecting digital art, design and audiovisual culture. Production and research centres such as *Hangar* (Barcelona) and *LABoral Centro de Arte y Creación Industrial* (Gijón) provide infrastructure for artistic experimentation in technology-based practices. At the same time, participatory models have gained prominence through initiatives such as *Medialab Prado* (Madrid) and *Hirikilabs* (San Sebastián), which promote collaborative creation, open innovation and citizen engagement in digital cultural processes.

Territorially, digital culture policy is increasingly structured through regional ecosystems and specialised clusters, including the *Land. Audiovisual and Digital Content Cluster of Andalusia*, the *Audiovisual Hub of Catalonia*, and the *Audiovisual Hub of the Cultural Industry of Galicia*. These initiatives connect cultural production with innovation, training and technological development, reflecting broader efforts to strengthen regional creative economies and support emerging sectors such as videogames, immersive media and digital content creation.

Recent policy debates focus on the implications of artificial intelligence, platformisation and digital sovereignty. In response, the *Cultural Rights Plan 2025-2030* incorporates measures to strengthen digital infrastructures, promote open and interoperable technologies and expand access to cultural resources. These include the creation of an Office for Digital Democracy, which provides technical guidance and training for cultural institutions; the development of platforms for the circulation and preservation of digital content; and support for multilingual access and more flexible copyright frameworks.

Additional actions aim to enhance digital participation and preserve cultural diversity, including the consolidation of digital heritage infrastructures such as PARES, museum documentation systems (DOMUS and CER.es), and the Spanish Web Archive. The Plan also supports digital cultural creation through initiatives such as the introduction of a National

Video Game Award, the expansion of digital skills programmes (e.g. DigitARTE), and the provision of resources for community-based digital creation.

Finally, the Spanish Agency for Cultural Action (AC/E) contributes to the analysis of digital cultural trends through its *Annual Report on Digital Culture*, which examines evolving practices in the cultural sector. The most recent edition (2026), *Mapping the Use of AI in Spanish-language Digital Creation*, highlights the growing impact of artificial intelligence and the increasing segmentation of cultural consumption, raising new challenges for cultural policy and governance.

2.5 Cultural and social diversity

2.5.1 National / international intercultural dialogue

Intercultural dialogue in Spain has progressively evolved from a predominantly state-led model towards a multi-level framework involving public institutions, local authorities, civil society organisations and cultural actors. Today, intercultural initiatives increasingly intersect with broader debates on cultural rights, diversity, migration, social inclusion and democratic participation.

At the national level, cooperation between the Ministry of Culture and the Autonomous Communities remains central, while implementation is increasingly carried out through local institutions and community-based initiatives. Museums, libraries, cultural centres and civic spaces play a growing role in promoting participation and inclusion, particularly in contexts shaped by cultural diversity and migration. Programmes such as *More Social Museums* [Museos más sociales] contribute to improving accessibility and reinforcing the role of museums as spaces for social cohesion and cultural exchange. Within this framework, the concept of the “intercultural museum” has gained prominence, referring to institutions that foster interaction between cultures and social groups while strengthening the intercultural dimension of cultural heritage.

Recent policy developments have also emphasised the need to reassess museum narratives and collections through more inclusive and critical perspectives, particularly in national institutions such as the National Museum of Anthropology and the Museum of the Americas. Framed within the *Cultural Rights Plan 2025–2030*, these initiatives aim to diversify historical representations, incorporate underrepresented perspectives and broaden approaches to heritage interpretation.

At the international level, Spain maintains an active role in Euro-Mediterranean cooperation through institutions and networks dedicated to cultural exchange and dialogue. The *European Institute of the Mediterranean* (IEMed), based in Barcelona, operates as a platform for research, debate and cooperation across the Mediterranean region, promoting knowledge exchange, training and civil society participation.

Spain also plays an important role in the *Anna Lindh Foundation*, a key organisation fostering

intercultural dialogue across Europe and the Mediterranean. Through the *Spanish Anna Lindh Network*, which brings together around 160 civil society organisations, initiatives are developed to promote mutual understanding, strengthen coexistence in diversity and encourage participation in plural democratic societies, particularly among younger generations.

Similarly, the *Three Cultures Foundation*, created through collaboration between the Andalusian Government and the Kingdom of Morocco, serves as a significant platform for cooperation between Europe, North Africa and the Middle East. Its activities focus on dialogue, cultural exchange and the promotion of mutual understanding across regions with strong historical and cultural ties.

2.5.2 Diversity education

Intercultural education in Spain is developed through both curricular provisions and broader educational and cultural policies. Rather than existing as a standalone subject, intercultural perspectives are integrated transversally across all educational stages, linked to wider objectives such as inclusion, democratic citizenship, cultural diversity, equality and social cohesion. Within Spain's decentralised institutional framework, responsibility for intercultural education is shared between the central government and the Autonomous Communities, which hold extensive competences in curriculum design and implementation.

At the national level, the main framework is established by *Organic Law 2/2006 on Education*, as amended by *Organic Law 3/2020 (LOMLOE)*. This legislation places strong emphasis on inclusive education, respect for diversity and the development of key competences, particularly civic, social and cultural competences. It identifies cultural plurality, equality, non-discrimination and peaceful coexistence as fundamental principles of the education system. As a result, intercultural learning is addressed primarily through cross-curricular competencies and citizenship-oriented objectives, rather than through a distinct discipline.

In practice, intercultural education is largely administered by educational authorities, rather than cultural policy institutions. The Ministry of Education, Vocational Training and Sports defines general principles and curricular frameworks, while the Autonomous Communities are responsible for implementation and often develop complementary programmes adapted to their social, linguistic and cultural contexts. Local authorities and schools also play an important role through school-based projects and collaboration with cultural organisations and civil society actors.

The main objectives of intercultural education include promoting equality and inclusion, fostering understanding of cultural diversity, encouraging multilingualism, preventing discrimination and social exclusion, and strengthening democratic participation and coexistence. These approaches aim to balance shared constitutional values with the recognition of cultural and linguistic plurality. In practice, intercultural education reflects both the growing diversity associated with migration and the coexistence of multiple linguistic and cultural identities within Spain.

Recent curricular reforms have also incorporated broader frameworks of global citizenship education, integrating competences related to human rights, sustainable development, democratic values, gender equality and cultural diversity. Subjects linked to civic and ethical education, reinforced under recent reforms, play a key role in advancing these objectives.

Arts and cultural education constitute an important channel for intercultural learning. Curricula in music, visual arts, literature and performing arts increasingly include references to diverse cultural traditions and seek to promote recognition of cultural diversity as a defining feature of contemporary society. In regions with strong linguistic identities, intercultural approaches are often closely linked to multilingual education policies.

Beyond the formal curriculum, a wide range of initiatives developed by schools, cultural institutions and third-sector organisations contribute to the development of intercultural competences. Museums, libraries and cultural centres implement programmes aimed at fostering dialogue between diverse communities, while artistic mediation, participatory cultural projects and artist residencies in schools are increasingly used to support intercultural understanding and engagement.

In addition, Spain participates in various international and European initiatives that reinforce intercultural education. These include the UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ASPnet), which promotes global citizenship, intercultural dialogue and sustainable development, and Erasmus+ programmes, which support projects focused on cultural exchange, inclusion and youth participation. National initiatives such as the Intercultural Community Intervention (ICI) Project and mentoring programmes like Rossinyol further contribute to fostering coexistence and intercultural learning at the local level.

Despite these developments, implementation remains uneven across territories and institutions. The decentralised structure of the education system allows adaptation to local contexts but also generates differences in priorities, resources and pedagogical approaches. As a result, intercultural education continues to evolve through the interaction between national frameworks, regional policies and broader societal debates.

2.5.3 Media pluralism & content diversity

Responsibility for media policy in Spain is institutionally distinct from cultural policy, although important intersections remain in areas such as audiovisual production, linguistic diversity and public service media. While the Institute of Cinematography and Audiovisual Arts (ICAA) continues to support audiovisual creation and distribution, broader media regulation increasingly operates within digital communication and telecommunications frameworks.

Spain's media landscape combines national, regional, public and private operators within a highly decentralised system. Since the 1980s, the Autonomous Communities have developed their own public broadcasting structures, many of which play a key role in promoting regional languages and cultural expression. Public broadcasters in bilingual regions—particularly in Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia—continue to function as important

instruments for linguistic diversity and cultural representation.

Content diversity and social inclusion have become increasingly central to media policy. Public service media are expected to reflect Spain's cultural, social and linguistic diversity, while recent initiatives aim to improve representation and accessibility for underrepresented communities. Programmes supporting diversity in audiovisual content and multilingual communication have contributed to broadening participation and visibility across different social groups.

At the national level, recent initiatives increasingly combine the promotion of media pluralism with media literacy and responses to digital disinformation. Public service media organisations have expanded actions aimed at fostering critical engagement with information environments. A key example is *VerificaRTVE*, a fact-checking and media literacy initiative designed to combat disinformation and strengthen citizens' critical capacities in digital contexts. RTVE has also developed educational resources and tools to promote digital literacy and responsible media consumption.

The rapid transformation of media environments has shifted policy concerns beyond traditional broadcasting structures. Current debates increasingly focus on digital platforms, media concentration, disinformation, algorithmic visibility, and the sustainability and independence of public service media. These issues have gained additional relevance in the context of European regulatory developments, including the implementation of the *European Media Freedom Act* and broader initiatives addressing platform governance and digital rights.

Recent assessments continue to identify structural challenges in the Spanish media ecosystem, particularly regarding ownership concentration, political independence and equitable access for minority communities. Questions relating to governance models for public broadcasters, the representation of cultural diversity and the strengthening of media literacy remain central areas of policy discussion.

At the regional level, initiatives promoting diversity and inclusion continue to play an important role. In Catalonia, the Audiovisual Diversity Board [Mesa per a la Diversitat en l'Audiovisual] remains a longstanding mechanism promoting intercultural representation and inclusive media narratives through collaboration between broadcasters, regulators, and civil society organisations. More broadly, regional public broadcasters continue to play an important role in supporting linguistic diversity and strengthening local cultural ecosystems.

2.5.4 Language

Language policy remains a central component of Spain's cultural and institutional framework, reflecting its multilingual character. The 1978 Constitution recognises Castilian as the official language of the State, while granting co-official status to other languages in their respective Autonomous Communities, including Catalan, Basque, Galician and Aranese. Other minority languages, such as Asturian and Aragonese, also receive varying degrees of protection. This linguistic framework constitutes a key pillar of Spain's cultural diversity.

Language policy is primarily implemented at the regional level, particularly in the fields of education and cultural promotion, through bilingual or multilingual models aimed at protecting and normalising co-official languages. At the same time, it entails ongoing challenges related to territorial cohesion, migration and the balance between linguistic rights and nationwide communication.

Three structural dimensions continue to shape this policy area: the intersection between linguistic and cultural policy—especially in cultural industries; the role of language in the integration of migrant populations; and the balance between the promotion of regional languages and the function of Castilian as a shared language, particularly in education. In this context, language policy is also influenced by differences in political priorities across levels of government, which are reflected in varying approaches to funding and institutional support for linguistic diversity. In several Autonomous Communities—particularly the Valencian Community, the Balearic Islands, and Aragon—regional governments led by right-wing (PP) and far-right (Vox) parties have reduced funding and institutional support for language promotion and policies aimed at fostering linguistic pluralism. In response, the central government led by centre-left (PSOE) and left-wing (Sumar) parties has reinforced support for minority languages, including through targeted funding measures.

In recent years, language policy has become increasingly integrated into broader cultural rights frameworks. The *Cultural Rights Plan 2025–2030* introduces measures aimed at promoting linguistic diversity and ensuring equitable access to culture across official and recognised languages. These include:

- support for cultural production and dissemination in co-official languages, including grants for literature, audiovisual works and the performing arts;
- funding for translation programmes, both between Spain's languages and into foreign languages, to enhance circulation and international visibility;
- promotion of multilingual cultural platforms and digital content, ensuring access to cultural resources across diverse linguistic communities;
- strengthening the presence of linguistic diversity in heritage and documentation systems, including museums, archives and digital collections.

In the digital sphere, policy efforts increasingly focus on enhancing the presence of Spain's languages in technological environments. Public initiatives support the development of language technologies, digital content and data infrastructures, reflecting the growing importance of linguistic diversity in areas such as artificial intelligence and digital communication.

Recent developments also illustrate the continued relevance of language policy within broader governance dynamics. Measures to support minority languages—including increased funding for institutions such as the Aragonese Academy of Language—form part of ongoing efforts to reinforce linguistic diversity and address territorial imbalances, while highlighting the evolving nature of multi-level governance in this field.

2.5.5 Gender

Gender equality has become an increasingly consolidated dimension of cultural policy in Spain, driven by both international developments in the cultural and creative sectors and domestic institutional reforms. Over time, policy approaches have evolved from isolated initiatives towards a more structured framework based on gender mainstreaming across cultural governance.

This evolution is anchored in *Organic Law 3/2007 on effective equality between women and men*, which introduced gender mainstreaming as a core administrative principle and established Equality Units across ministries. Within the cultural field, this has led to the creation of specialised governance and monitoring structures, including the *Gender Equality Committee on Cultural Affairs*, the *Observatory for Gender Equality in the Cultural Sector*, and digital tools such as the *Ministry of Culture's Equality Space* (launched in 2017), which provides resources for consultation, visibility and awareness-raising.

A major step forward has been the adoption of the *Plan for Equality in Culture (2024–2026)*, representing a milestone in cultural governance. The Plan aims to ensure gender equality across the cultural sector and to mainstream gender perspectives within the Ministry of Culture and its affiliated bodies. It is embedded within the broader *Cultural Rights Plan*, reflecting a shift towards a rights-based approach in which equality is considered a fundamental condition for access to and participation in culture.

The Plan is based on a dual strategy combining gender mainstreaming and targeted measures. On the one hand, it integrates gender perspectives across all areas of cultural policy, including funding systems, institutional practices, communication strategies and evaluation frameworks. On the other hand, it maintains specific actions addressing structural inequalities affecting women in the cultural sector. This combined approach reflects the understanding that systemic transformation and corrective interventions are mutually reinforcing⁵.

Policy implementation reflects this dual logic. Gender criteria have been progressively incorporated into public funding and procurement procedures, while audiovisual support schemes—particularly through the Institute of Cinematography and Audiovisual Arts (ICAA)—include incentives for projects led by women and recognition mechanisms for works promoting gender equality. These measures are complemented by cultural programming initiatives, such as exhibitions dedicated to women artists in state museums and festivals like *Ellas Crean* [They Create], as well as capacity-building and training programmes for cultural professionals.

Despite these advances, structural inequalities persist. In 2024, women accounted for 40.6% of employment in the cultural sector, compared to 59.4% for men, with significant variation across subsectors. Women are comparatively more represented in libraries, archives,

⁵ Look here for more details: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000395703>

museums and publishing, but remain underrepresented in the music industry and in senior creative and decision-making positions. This pattern reflects ongoing vertical segregation, where high participation in education and entry-level roles does not translate into proportional representation in leadership and authorship.

The current *Cultural Rights Plan 2025–2030* further consolidates gender equality as a cross-cutting objective. It strengthens gender-sensitive funding criteria, promotes the collection of sex-disaggregated and intersectional data, reinforces training in gender equality for cultural staff, and introduces measures addressing gender-based violence in cultural and audiovisual environments. These actions extend policy beyond representation, incorporating workplace conditions and structural protection as key dimensions.

At the same time, implementation remains uneven within Spain's multi-level governance system, reflecting different policy priorities across Autonomous Communities. In addition, digital environments have introduced new challenges, including online harassment and hate speech, which disproportionately affect women in public cultural and creative roles and are increasingly recognised as emerging areas for policy intervention.

2.5.6 Disability

Disability inclusion in cultural policy in Spain has progressively evolved from isolated accessibility initiatives towards a more structured, rights-based approach. While earlier policies focused primarily on physical access and assistive technologies, recent developments reflect a broader understanding of cultural participation as a cultural right, encompassing accessibility, artistic production and institutional inclusion.

An important early milestone was the *Comprehensive Strategy of Culture for All* (2011), jointly developed by the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Health, Social Policy and Equality. The strategy aimed to ensure accessibility to cultural spaces, activities and services; support artistic creation by persons with disabilities; and promote research into technologies facilitating access to cultural content. Its implementation was accompanied by the establishment of the *Inclusive Culture Forum*, an inter-ministerial platform bringing together public institutions, disability organisations and experts to coordinate and monitor progress.

During the 2017–2020 policy cycle, accessibility became more firmly integrated into cultural administration and programming. Institutions such as the National Institute of Performing Arts and Music (INAEM) expanded initiatives to improve accessibility and participation in the performing arts. These included programmes such as *Teatro Accesible* [Accessible Theatre], introducing audio description and assistive technologies, and *Una mirada diferente* [A Different Look], which promotes artistic work by performers with disabilities alongside awareness-raising and training activities.

More recently, disability inclusion has been further consolidated through the *Cultural Rights Plan 2025–2030*, which positions accessibility as a core dimension of cultural citizenship. The Plan promotes cross-sector coordination and integrates accessibility criteria into funding

mechanisms, cultural programming and institutional practices, while reinforcing anti-discrimination measures in public cultural institutions.

Within this framework, INAEM continues to expand its inclusion agenda. The *18th edition of the Inclusion in the Performing Arts Conference* (April 2026) focused on themes such as displacement and migration, reflecting an increasingly intersectional approach. In parallel, INAEM is preparing a *Plan for Inclusion* aimed at unifying institutional policies and aligning them with the objectives of the *Cultural Rights Plan*. This marks a shift from fragmented initiatives towards a more coherent and transversal inclusion strategy.

Overall, disability policy in the cultural sector has moved from a predominantly technical focus on access towards a broader participatory and rights-based framework. However, implementation remains uneven across institutions and regions, with ongoing challenges related to consistent accessibility standards, sustainable funding and the full inclusion of persons with disabilities not only as audiences, but also as creators, professionals and decision-makers.

2.6 Culture and social inclusion

Social inclusion has become an increasingly important dimension of cultural policy in Spain, although policy approaches have evolved significantly over time. Earlier frameworks tended to conceive culture primarily as an instrument for social integration and territorial cohesion. More recent approaches, however, reflect a shift towards a rights-based perspective, recognising participation in cultural life as a fundamental component of citizenship and social inclusion.

This transition is particularly reflected in the *Cultural Rights Plan 2025–2030*, which places equal access to cultural participation at the centre of cultural governance. Rather than focusing exclusively on access to institutions or programmes, the Plan adopts a broader understanding of inclusion that encompasses participation, representation and the reduction of structural inequalities affecting different social groups.

Within this framework, cultural policies increasingly address barriers related to socioeconomic conditions, migration, ethnicity, disability, territorial disparities and other intersecting forms of exclusion. The Plan promotes measures aimed at strengthening participation among underrepresented communities, improving accessibility, integrating cultural rights into public policies and fostering cooperation between cultural institutions, social organisations and local communities.

Particular emphasis is placed on territorial equity and proximity-based cultural action. Public policies seek to reduce disparities in access to cultural resources across regions and to reinforce local cultural ecosystems through community-based approaches. In this context, initiatives increasingly support cultural mediation, collaborative governance mechanisms and participatory practices designed to strengthen connections between institutions and diverse social groups.

The museum and heritage sector has played an important role in this shift. Initiatives such as *Museos más sociales* [Museums More Social] promote the concept of the “inclusive museum” as an institution that contributes to social cohesion and actively addresses exclusion, discrimination and inequality. Accessibility and inclusion are thus increasingly understood not only in physical terms, but also as social, interpretative and participatory processes.

This broader approach also extends to artistic practice. Participatory and community-based models are gaining relevance, as illustrated by initiatives such as the *DĀD model* (*Dance Amplified Dimensions*), developed by the Choreographic Centre of La Gomera (Canary Islands) over the past 25 years and recently supported by INAEM through the newly created Office for Dance Dissemination (ODD). By combining contemporary dance, social participation and community mediation, the model seeks to broaden access to artistic practice and extend its social and cultural benefits, particularly for vulnerable groups.

At the same time, social inclusion policies are shaped by Spain’s multi-level governance structure and marked territorial diversity. Local governments and civil society organisations play a key role in promoting intercultural dialogue, community participation and inclusion initiatives targeting migrants, ethnic minorities and socially vulnerable populations. Organisations such as the CEPAIM Foundation develop community-based programmes aimed at strengthening coexistence and exchanging practices of intercultural action. Similarly, local cultural initiatives—such as Murcia: Three Cultures or the Raval(s) Festival in Barcelona—illustrate how participatory cultural projects can reinforce community ties, increase the visibility of cultural diversity and create spaces for interaction between different social groups.

Overall, Spanish cultural policy increasingly frames social inclusion as a matter of cultural rights rather than solely an instrument of social intervention. Nevertheless, important challenges remain, particularly regarding unequal access to participation, territorial disparities and the need to ensure that inclusion extends beyond access to enable active participation and representation in cultural life.

2.7 Societal impacts of arts

Recent cultural policy developments in Spain increasingly recognise the contribution of culture to wellbeing, community development and sustainable social transformation. While earlier approaches often framed culture primarily as an instrument for social intervention, current policies place greater emphasis on cultural participation as a right and on the broader social value of cultural experiences.

This shift is reflected in the *Cultural Rights Plan 2025–2030*, which highlights the relationship between culture, wellbeing and quality of life. The Plan promotes measures aimed at strengthening the social impact of culture through community participation, cultural mediation and collaboration between cultural institutions and sectors such as health, education and social services. It also supports initiatives designed to improve emotional wellbeing, reduce social isolation and facilitate participation among groups in vulnerable situations.

Attention is given to the role of culture in health and care systems. The Plan encourages the development of cultural programmes linked to wellbeing and to social prescribing approaches, while fostering partnerships between cultural institutions and healthcare actors. This reflects a growing recognition of culture not only as a domain of artistic expression, but also as a factor contributing to individual and collective wellbeing.

At the level of programmes and initiatives, schemes such as *Cultura y Ciudadanía* [Culture and Citizenship] have contributed to shaping national debates on culture, participation and social transformation, with particular attention to community engagement, rural contexts and inclusive practices. Cultural institutions increasingly develop projects exploring the relationship between culture and wellbeing, including initiatives by museums and cultural centres aimed at increasing participation among vulnerable groups and evidencing the benefits of cultural engagement.

2.8 Cultural sustainability

The relationship between culture and sustainable development also represents an evolving area of policy. Although cultural sustainability is not yet fully integrated at all levels of governance, public institutions increasingly recognise culture as a transversal dimension of social cohesion, territorial development and community resilience. In this context, local governments play a particularly important role in linking cultural action to broader social and sustainability objectives.

Much of this development has taken place at the local level, where cultural organisations, foundations and community actors integrate cultural and heritage resources into strategies for social and territorial development. Examples include initiatives led by the Cerezales Antonino y Cinia Foundation, Fundación Santa María de Albarracín, and Fundación Santa María la Real, which combine heritage management, cultural participation and community development approaches.

Overall, cultural policy in Spain increasingly frames culture not only as a sectoral field but as a key contributor to wellbeing and sustainable development. Nevertheless, challenges remain in translating these objectives into stable policy instruments, coordinated governance structures and long-term evaluation frameworks capable of measuring social impact.

2.9 Other main cultural policy issues

Information is currently not available.

3. Cultural and creative sectors

3.1 Heritage

At the state level, cultural heritage policy in Spain is led by the Directorate-General for Cultural Heritage and Fine Arts, through bodies such as the Office for the Protection of Historical Heritage and the Spanish Cultural Heritage Institute (IPCE). Their core functions include safeguarding heritage assets, enhancing state-owned collections, promoting international cooperation, and carrying out conservation and restoration interventions.

Policy action is structured around several key priorities: strengthening legal mechanisms to prevent illicit trafficking; improving cataloguing and documentation systems; supporting acquisitions for public museums, libraries and archives; and financing conservation through instruments such as the “1% Cultural” programme. The Ministry of Culture also plays a coordinating role with the Autonomous Communities—which hold primary competences—through bodies such as the Historical Heritage Council.

These actions are articulated through the National Cultural Heritage Plans—currently fourteen—which provide a shared framework for coordination across public administrations and private actors, integrating conservation, research, training and dissemination.

In parallel, state-managed institutions such as Patrimonio Nacional [National Heritage] oversee Royal Sites and Collections, combining conservation with public access and the modernisation of management systems. Reporting to the Ministry of the Presidency, this body fulfils both institutional representation functions and cultural, educational and scientific objectives.

Spain’s cultural heritage governance reflects a consolidated multi-level system in which the main challenges concern implementation and coordination rather than conceptual expansion. Within this framework, several persistent issues can be identified:

- *Legal and administrative coordination across levels of government.* Challenges remain in aligning national, regional and local heritage regimes, particularly regarding ownership, protection frameworks and the balance between public interest and private rights.
- *Social function and territorial embedding of heritage.* Heritage increasingly contributes to identity formation, education and local cohesion, although implementation remains uneven across territories and institutions.
- *Conservation versus economic and touristic use.* Tensions persist between preservation objectives and tourism-related pressures, particularly in highly visited sites where sustainability and regulatory capacity are key concerns.
- *Consolidation of expanded heritage categories.* Intangible, industrial and contemporary heritage are now fully integrated into policy frameworks; the main challenge lies in ensuring their effective management and long-term sustainability.

Recent policy developments reflect a shift towards sustainability, digital transformation and increased social participation in heritage governance. Notable measures include the expansion of the “2% cultural” scheme in 2021—allocating 1% of its funds to artistic creativity—, the adoption in 2025 of the *Protocol for the Implementation of Renewable Energy in Cultural Heritage Assets*, and the approval in 2026 of the *National Archaeology Plan*, the first new heritage plan since 2015. Together, these initiatives illustrate an emphasis on coordination, environmental adaptation and policy renewal.

3.2 Archives and libraries

The Subdirectorate-General for Library Coordination carries out its activities along four main strategic lines: cooperation; information and communication technologies (ICT); the improvement of library infrastructure and resources; and the preservation of bibliographic heritage. A key priority in recent years has been to improve public access to cultural works via the Internet. To this end, the Ministry has implemented several initiatives, including:

- the *Portal of Spanish ArchiveS (PARES)*, a web-based database providing access to the national historical documentary heritage;
- the *Virtual Library of Bibliographical Heritage*, which enables users to consult a wide range of digitised documents from Spain’s bibliographical collections;
- the *Virtual Library of Historical Newspapers*, which contributes to the Europeana and Europeana Local projects;
- the *Museum Libraries Network (BIMUS)*, offering access to the catalogues of libraries from 18 state-owned museums; and
- *Hispana*, the national aggregator of digital collections from archives, libraries and museums, with functions analogous to Europeana.

The *Cultural Rights Plan 2025-2030*, adopted in July 2025, introduces measures aimed at reinforcing the social role of archives and libraries. In the field of archives, the Plan promotes a more plural understanding of collective memory through the creation of a *Social Movements Archive* and the development of initiatives to incorporate the experiences of historically marginalised groups into national archival collections. Additional actions include the establishment of research teams to reassess existing holdings, support for training in the creation and maintenance of citizen archives, and increased visibility of collections related to colonial history, slavery and cultural diversity. The digitisation of and public access to these materials are also key priorities.

Regarding libraries, the Plan supports the development of a *Network of Citizen Laboratories in Libraries*, aimed at strengthening their role as civic spaces for participation and social innovation beyond traditional lending functions. It also promotes the contribution of libraries to broader sustainability and wellbeing objectives, including their potential role as climate shelters in the context of climate adaptation policies. Furthermore, financial support

is provided for the modernisation and environmental sustainability of libraries in municipalities with fewer than 50,000 inhabitants.

3.3 Performing arts

The promotion of cultural creation has been a central objective of Spanish cultural policy throughout the democratic period. Within this framework, the performing arts and music have consistently received significant public support and remain a major field of cultural intervention after heritage.

Over the past decade, policy priorities have focused on increasing demand, strengthening institutional cooperation and improving territorial balance. Efforts have centred on promoting circulation networks and exchanges across regions, enabling theatre, music, dance and circus productions to reach wider audiences while enhancing the quality of programming at all levels of government.

Institutionally, the creation in 2025 of the Directorate-General for Performing Arts and Music (*Royal Decree 1028/2025*) marked a significant reform, separating policy design from operational management, which remains under the National Institute for Performing Arts and Music (INAEM). This reorganisation has improved administrative efficiency and sectoral specialisation while maintaining an integrated approach to the performing arts value chain. INAEM continues to manage artistic programmes, foster cooperation with public and private actors, and provide financial support for production, touring and exhibition. Eleven national production units remain within its structure, along with initiatives such as the Inclusion in the Performing Arts Conference Series, while heritage and documentation functions have been transferred to the Directorate-General.

Recent policy developments also reflect a renewed commitment to specific sectors. In particular, greater emphasis has been placed on the circus sector through the *Strategic Framework for Circus in Spain (2025–2030)*, which aims to strengthen artistic creation, professional training, heritage preservation, and both national and international circulation.

The *Cultural Rights Plan 2025-2030* reinforces these priorities through targeted measures, including grants for theatre and circus, increased funding for translation and subtitling in co-official languages, and initiatives promoting inclusion and cultural democracy. The Plan also prioritises gender equality, including the objective of achieving 40% representation of women in INAEM programming.

Alongside structural reforms, audience development and access remain key concerns. Digital platforms such as *danza.es* and *teatro.es* enhance the visibility of artistic production and facilitate communication between creators and audiences. Programmes supporting inclusion, participation and new cultural uses of public space further reinforce this approach.

In terms of territorial circulation, the *PLATEA Programme*, implemented by INAEM in collaboration with the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (FEMP), plays a

central role in supporting stable performing arts seasons in local venues. In recent editions, the programme has expanded to more than 150 venues across most regions, facilitating hundreds of performances and attracting large audiences. It is complemented by additional circulation schemes such as *Circo a Escena*, *Girando por Salas* and *Danza a Escena*, which further promote touring and access to cultural programming nationwide.

Finally, internationalisation and innovation have gained increasing importance. The creation in 2026 of the Office for Dance Dissemination (ODD) reflects renewed efforts to promote Spanish performing arts internationally through initiatives such as professional showcases, residency networks and collaboration with leading centres of artistic research.

3.4 Visual arts and crafts

At the state level, contemporary visual arts policy in Spain is promoted by the Deputy Directorate-General for Visual Arts and Contemporary Creation, which supports artistic production and fosters collaboration with cultural and professional networks.

Recent policy developments, particularly within the *Cultural Rights Plan 2025-2030*, have prioritised territorial balance and access to cultural rights. Key measures include the strengthening of decentralised artistic residencies and the development of hybrid, multi-site initiatives connecting different territories in Spain and across Europe. These initiatives aim to promote artistic mobility, reduce regional disparities and encourage new forms of cultural cooperation, often linking visual arts with other disciplines—such as audiovisual production, architecture and performance—in response to contemporary challenges, including the climate emergency.

Within this framework, the *Tabacalera Centre for Artistic Production and Residencies* (Madrid) has been reinforced as a national hub for contemporary creation. Its model combines artistic production, residency programmes and community-oriented activities. The allocation of spaces within the Tabacalera complex to the Remontada Tabacalera collective and other local associations has further strengthened its social and participatory dimension, reinforcing links between contemporary creation and community engagement.

Beyond Madrid, *Tabakalera* (San Sebastián) operates as an International Centre for Contemporary Culture, combining creative production, public programming and collaboration with cultural and research institutions. In parallel, initiatives such as *Medialab Prado* exemplify citizen-based innovation through open calls, collaborative projects and interdisciplinary experimentation, contributing to more participatory models of cultural production.

Policy support is complemented by sectoral initiatives aimed at improving the professional conditions of artists and cultural operators. Organisations such as the *Institute of Contemporary Art* advocate for greater recognition of the sector and improved access to public funding, including mechanisms linked to the “2% cultural” scheme. Professional

associations such as the Spanish Association of Conservators and Restorers (ACRE) emphasise the importance of specialised training standards in heritage-related practices.

In the field of crafts, Fundesarte remains the leading organisation promoting and supporting Spanish craftsmanship. Since 2014, it has been integrated into the EOI Foundation (School of Industrial Organization), attached to the Ministry of Industry and Tourism. Its activities aim to strengthen the cultural and economic value of the sector through initiatives focused on visibility, innovation, sustainability and competitiveness. These include the organisation of the National Crafts Awards, coordination of the European Crafts Days, and the international promotion of Spanish crafts through exhibitions and cultural programmes.

3.5 Cultural arts and creative industries

3.5.1 General developments

Spanish cultural and creative industries (CCI) policy has evolved towards a consolidated framework combining innovation, digital transformation and territorial development. Current policy is structured around project-based support instruments coordinated by the Centre for the Coordination of Cultural Industries, which promotes cultural and creative activity across sectors such as audiovisual production, music, publishing, design, videogames, architecture and digital creation. This approach reflects a shift from sector-specific policy frameworks towards a broader ecosystem-based understanding of cultural production, closely linked to innovation systems and economic development.

Public policy instruments prioritise the strengthening of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), the professionalisation of the sector and improved access to funding through grants and innovation-oriented support schemes. Increasing attention is also given to collaboration between cultural operators, technology centres and research institutions, reinforcing the integration of culture within wider innovation ecosystems.

At the territorial level, CCIs are strongly embedded in regional innovation and cluster-based strategies. A prominent example is the Basque Country, where CCIs form part of smart specialisation strategies (RIS3) and are supported through initiatives such as the Basque District of Culture and Creativity (BDCC), which connects universities, companies and public institutions to foster innovation and internationalisation.

Similarly, Catalonia has developed a highly structured creative ecosystem combining public support, cultural institutions and innovation-led strategies, with Barcelona functioning as a major European hub for design, audiovisual production and digital creativity. In Madrid, policy development increasingly focuses on creative entrepreneurship, cultural programming and acceleration programmes for cultural enterprises, while the Valencian Community has strengthened its cultural and audiovisual strategy through integrated support for creative industries, innovation and internationalisation.

According to the *Cultural Statistics Yearbook 2025*, cultural industries accounted for approximately 2.2% of Spain's GDP in 2023, rising to 3.4% when intellectual property-related activities are included. The sector generated more than 31 billion euro in gross value added, with audiovisual and multimedia, publishing and visual arts representing the largest components.

From a European comparative perspective, cultural employment accounted for 3.8% of total employment in the EU in 2024, placing Spain broadly in line with the European average. In Spain, the cultural sector employed approximately 771,000 people in 2024 (3.6% of total employment), confirming its structural relevance within the labour market.

The business structure remains highly fragmented and dominated by SMEs: 68.3% of enterprises operate without employees, 26.6% have between 1 and 5 employees, 4.7% between 6 and 49 employees, and only 0.4% employ 50 or more workers. In total, the sector comprised approximately 185,500 enterprises in 2024, representing 5.7% of all registered companies. This structure underlines the importance of targeted policy instruments to support financing, scalability and digital transformation.

In terms of international trade, exports of culture-related goods reached approximately 2.1 billion euro in 2024, while imports amounted to 2.6 billion euro, maintaining a structural trade deficit despite a slight increase in exports and a decline in imports. As in previous years, the publishing sector remained the strongest-performing segment, generating 553.7 million euro in exports and sustaining a positive trade balance.

3.5.2 Books and press

In the field of books, Spanish cultural policy—led by the Subdirectorate-General for the Promotion of Books, Reading and Spanish Literature—focuses on three main priorities: promoting reading, supporting the publishing sector, and strengthening the international presence of Spanish literature. In recent years, particular emphasis has been placed on digital transformation, including the modernisation and digitisation of publishing activities.

Reading promotion remains a central objective, supported by both long-standing and recently updated national initiatives. The *Plan for the promotion of reading 2021-2024* provides the overarching framework, complemented by long-running programmes such as the *Maria Moliner Campaign* (since 1998), which targets municipalities with fewer than 50,000 inhabitants and contributes significantly to territorial cohesion. Additional initiatives include reading promotion activities linked to cultural events and commemorations, as well as programmes specifically designed for rural and depopulated areas.

These efforts are reinforced under the *Cultural Rights Plan 2025-2030*, which introduces measures to ensure equitable access to cultural creation and circulation across all official languages. These include grants for literary creation and comics, funding for translation both between Spain's co-official languages and into foreign languages, and support for publishing and cultural magazines. Further actions aim to strengthen reading habits and audience

development, particularly through targeted programmes in rural areas and investments in the modernisation and sustainability of public libraries in smaller municipalities.

At the regional level, the Autonomous Communities implement complementary strategies adapted to their respective contexts. Notable examples include Catalonia's *National Book and Reading Plan* and Madrid's *#LeeMadrid Strategic Plan for Books and Reading (2025–2028)*, which focus on promoting reading, reducing digital divides, and supporting the broader book ecosystem. Similar initiatives are developed in other regions through coordinated cultural, educational and library policies.

The sector is underpinned by a stable legislative framework, notably the *Reading, Books and Libraries Act* (2007) and the fixed book price system, which together support Spain's "cultural exception" model and contribute to diversity and sustainability in the publishing market. Monitoring and evaluation are supported by instruments such as the *Reading and Book Observatory*.

Internationalisation remains a key pillar of policy. The Ministry of Culture promotes Spanish literature abroad through translation grants, regular participation in international book fairs, and collaboration with institutions such as the Instituto Cervantes, cultural centres and universities, particularly in Latin America. Spain's participation as a guest or focus country at major international fairs in recent years reflects a sustained strategy to enhance the global visibility of Spanish authors and the publishing sector.

3.5.3 Audiovisual and interactive media

Spanish audiovisual policy operates within a consolidated framework in which cultural, industrial and digital objectives are increasingly articulated through integrated governance structures. Its current strategic orientation is closely linked to Spain's positioning as a major production hub, structured around the *Spain, Audiovisual Hub of Europe* initiative, launched in 2021 and consolidated as a long-term policy axis. Within this framework, priorities such as internationalisation, competitiveness, talent development and digital transformation increasingly extend to interactive media and videogames, understood as integral components of the broader cultural and creative industries ecosystem.

At the national level, the Institute of Cinematography and Audiovisual Arts (ICAA) remains the main implementing body, responsible for production support, distribution frameworks, international promotion and audiovisual heritage preservation, while ensuring coordination with the Autonomous Communities. Policy development emphasises sectoral resilience, linguistic diversity and support for independent production within an increasingly platform-based and globalised environment.

Recent policy evolution reflects the growing integration of audiovisual production within broader digital governance frameworks. The *Cultural Rights Plan 2025-2030* embeds audiovisual policy within a rights-based approach that prioritises access, participation and sustainability. Particular attention is given to the development of digital infrastructures, open

technological standards and emerging regulatory challenges associated with artificial intelligence, including transparency, ethical governance and the conditions of cultural production in algorithmic environments. Digital platforms such as *PLATFO* contribute to the dissemination and accessibility of audiovisual heritage and contemporary production.

Regulatory and financial mechanisms continue to operate through both European and national frameworks that promote investment in European works, strengthen independent production structures and safeguard market diversity. These instruments are increasingly deployed in a context shaped by platformisation and the transformation of audiovisual distribution systems.

Territorially, audiovisual activity is structured through regional ecosystems and creative clusters that bring together public administrations, cultural institutions, universities and innovation centres. This multi-level configuration reflects a broader shift towards place-based cultural and industrial development in regions such as Madrid, Catalonia, the Valencian Community and the Basque Country.

The videogame and interactive media sector is now fully incorporated into cultural and innovation policy frameworks, recognised as a structural component of the creative industries. Policy attention focuses on consolidation, professionalisation, internationalisation and its growing interconnection with audiovisual production and digital technologies.

Audience development has also become an important area of intervention. Initiatives such as *Cine Sénior* and *Cine Escuela* aim to broaden participation and improve access among different social groups, reflecting a wider commitment to cultural inclusion and audience diversification.

3.5.4 Music

Spanish cultural policy in the field of music has traditionally combined the protection of intellectual property with support for cultural creation and the strengthening of the music value chain.

Alongside regulatory measures, public policy has addressed issues related to piracy and access to cultural content through a combination of enforcement strategies, awareness campaigns and educational initiatives. Early instruments, such as national anti-piracy strategies, have progressively evolved towards approaches centred on legal access, digital platforms and the promotion of legitimate cultural content. More recent initiatives, such as *Cultura en Positivo* [Culture in Positive], reflect this shift by encouraging responsible digital consumption and supporting sustainable cultural ecosystems, particularly among younger audiences.

In recent years, policy attention has increasingly focused on the internationalisation and competitiveness of the Spanish music sector. Within this framework, initiatives such as *Music by Spain* (2026) illustrate a growing emphasis on coordinated international promotion aimed

at strengthening the global presence of Spanish artists and music professionals. This approach builds on a broader ecosystem of cultural diplomacy and export support involving institutions such as the Ministry of Culture, the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), the Instituto Cervantes and Acción Cultural Española (AC/E), alongside sectoral organisations such as Es_Música.

At the territorial level, music policy is increasingly structured through regional strategies and place-based cultural ecosystems. These include funding schemes, support for live music and integrated cultural development programmes. A representative example is the *València Music City 25–30 strategy* in the Comunitat Valenciana, which frames music as a transversal driver of cultural, social and economic development, combining governance innovation, urban planning and support for the local music industry within a long-term strategic vision.

3.5.5 Design and creative services

Design and creative services in Spain are increasingly framed within a cross-cutting policy approach linking cultural policy, innovation and industrial strategy. Governance is shared across the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Industry and Tourism, and the Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities, with growing emphasis on coordination between cultural and innovation frameworks rather than sectoral separation.

At the state level, the *National Awards for Innovation and Design* remain a key instrument for recognising excellence and promoting design as a driver of innovation and competitiveness. Complementing this, industrial policy instruments such as *Innovative Business Clusters* (AEIs) support collaboration between companies, designers, and research centres, strengthening design-led innovation ecosystems.

Cultural visibility and international projection are further supported through major festivals and platforms, such as the *Madrid Design Festival* and *OFFF Barcelona*, which highlight the convergence between design, digital creativity and audiovisual culture, while enhancing Spain's position within global creative networks.

At the territorial level, design is strongly embedded in regional creative ecosystems. Barcelona stands out as a major European hub, supported by institutions such as the *Disseny Hub Barcelona* (DHub) and a dense network of cultural, professional and innovation actors integrating programming, research and industry collaboration. Madrid also plays a central role through cultural programming and creative industries initiatives, while other regions—notably the Basque Country and the Valencian Community—continue to develop place-based strategies linking design, innovation and territorial development.

3.5.6 Cultural and creative tourism

Cultural and creative tourism in Spain has progressively evolved from a predominantly promotional policy framework into a more integrated model linked to sustainability, territorial development and cultural rights. Early strategies—such as the *Plan for the*

International Promotion of Cultural Tourism (2010–2012) and subsequent inter-ministerial cooperation mechanisms—contributed to positioning Spain internationally as a cultural destination through the promotion of museums, heritage sites, performing arts and cultural routes. These initiatives were complemented by related programmes supporting educational and cultural mobility, including the *Study in Spain* framework.

In recent years, cultural tourism policy has been reoriented towards more integrated governance models combining cultural policy, tourism regulation and sustainability objectives. This shift is reflected in programmes linked to the Recovery and Resilience framework, as well as in updated national strategies that emphasise digitalisation, diversification of tourism flows and the preservation of cultural assets in contexts of high visitor pressure. Public support continues to be channelled through funding schemes for cultural industries, cultural promotion activities and the integration of digital technologies into cultural and tourism services.

Current policy also prioritises improving the visibility and accessibility of Spain's cultural offer through consolidated platforms and international promotion tools. This approach has progressively replaced earlier, more fragmented communication strategies—such as *España es Cultura* [Spain is Culture]—with broader institutional branding and integrated digital dissemination systems.

According to the *Cultural Statistics Yearbook 2025*, cultural tourism further consolidated its importance in 2024. Cultural motivations accounted for 19.8% of leisure trips by residents and 23.6% of international arrivals. Overall, more than 38 million trips were linked to cultural purposes, generating over 38.4 billion euro in expenditure. Compared with pre-pandemic levels (2019), this represents an increase of 12.1% in domestic cultural trips and 32.7% among international visitors, confirming both strong post-pandemic recovery and sustained growth in cultural demand

4. Law & Legislation

4.1 General legislation

4.1.1 Constitution

The 1978 Constitution, which restored parliamentary democracy in Spain, gave considerable prominence to cultural affairs. The “constitutional culture” of the 1978 Magna Carta is the result of a process that unfolded throughout the twentieth century, during which cultural concerns gained increasing recognition as matters suitable for constitutional regulation. An important precedent was the Constitution of the Second Republic (1931–1939), the first Spanish constitution to include culture among the areas of government intervention and, consequently, as a legitimate field for the establishment of public responsibilities and citizens’ rights.

Culture constitutes a central domain of public action in the Spanish Constitution of 1978, which establishes the legal foundations of cultural policy in the democratic period. The Constitution recognises culture both as a fundamental right of citizens and as a core responsibility of public authorities, situating it among the guiding principles of social and economic policy.

Several constitutional provisions define this framework. The right of access to culture is recognised in Articles 9 and 44, which assign public authorities the task of promoting the conditions necessary for its effective enjoyment. The Constitution also guarantees freedom of expression and artistic creation as key elements of cultural democracy (Article 20), while mandating the protection, conservation and promotion of the historical, cultural and artistic heritage (Article 46).

Linguistic and cultural plurality is explicitly recognised as a fundamental characteristic of the Spanish State. Article 3 establishes Castilian as the official language while granting co-official status to other languages in their respective Autonomous Communities, thereby ensuring the protection and promotion of Spain’s linguistic diversity. This principle is further reinforced in the Statutes of Autonomy of the Autonomous Communities.

More broadly, the Constitution defines a decentralised system of cultural governance, in which competences are shared between the State and the Autonomous Communities. This distribution has enabled the development of diverse cultural policies adapted to regional contexts, while maintaining a common constitutional framework for the protection of cultural rights.

4.1.2 Allocation of public funds

In Spain, there is no single overarching law specifically governing the allocation of public funds for culture. Instead, funding is determined within the framework of general public budgeting procedures and is shaped by the priorities of the Ministry of Culture and other

competent authorities at state, regional and local levels.

At the central level, the allocation of cultural funding is integrated into the annual State Budget process, which defines the distribution of resources across policy areas, programmes and institutions. Cultural expenditure is therefore structured through programme-based budgeting, enabling the Ministry to prioritise different sectors, initiatives and strategic objectives on a yearly basis.

The institutional framework for budget preparation and management is defined, among other instruments, by *Royal Decree 323/2024*, which assigns key responsibilities to the Subsecretariat of Culture. This body is responsible for: preparing and processing the draft annual budget of the Ministry; determining the structure of programmes and sub-programmes that define departmental activities; coordinating the preparation of budgets of affiliated public bodies and consolidating them within the Ministry's overall budget; managing and processing budgetary modifications and monitoring and overseeing budget implementation.

Beyond the central administration, Spain's decentralised governance system implies that a significant share of public cultural funding is allocated by the Autonomous Communities and local authorities, which have their own budgetary competences and priorities. As a result, the overall allocation of public funds for culture reflects a multi-level system, combining state-level strategic orientation with regionally and locally driven spending.

In addition, cultural funding increasingly incorporates project-based instruments, competitive grants, and co-financing schemes linked to European programmes, including those associated with the Recovery and Resilience Facility and other EU funding frameworks.

4.1.3 Social security frameworks

The social protection of artists and cultural workers in Spain has historically been shaped by the tension between standard labour regulations and the intermittent, project-based nature of cultural work. Early provisions within the social security system sought to address income irregularity and discontinuous employment patterns, including measures introduced in the 1980s such as income averaging and early retirement schemes for performing artists.

Despite these adaptations, cultural professionals have long faced persistent challenges, including fragmented career paths, employment instability and the limited capacity of general social protection systems to accommodate irregular working conditions. In response, reforms linked to the *Artist's Statute* have progressively sought to align labour and social security frameworks with the realities of the cultural sector. The establishment in 2021 of an Interministerial Commission for the Development of the Artist's Statute represented an important step towards institutional coordination and policy consolidation.

A key milestone was the adoption of *Royal Decree-Law 5/2022*, which introduced a more comprehensive framework recognising the specific characteristics of cultural labour. One of its main innovations was the creation of a new contractual model adapted to intermittent

activity. The reform also promoted more stable employment arrangements—such as open-ended discontinuous contracts—while extending protection beyond performers to include technical, auxiliary and independent cultural workers. In addition, it addressed long-standing issues such as the misuse of self-employment.

Further reforms were introduced through *Royal Decree-Law 1/2023*, which expanded social protection mechanisms for cultural professionals. These include a specific unemployment benefit tailored to discontinuous work patterns, improved compatibility between retirement pensions and income derived from artistic activity or copyright, and adjustments to contribution systems to better reflect sectoral conditions. Complementary fiscal measures have also contributed to adapting taxation frameworks to the characteristics of cultural work.

Self-employed artists and authors continue to face particular challenges linked to income volatility and discontinuous careers. While recent reforms have improved their integration into social protection systems, gaps remain in ensuring consistent coverage across different professional situations.

Overall, recent developments reflect a transition from fragmented and exceptional provisions towards a more coherent and sector-sensitive framework, based on greater institutional coordination and stakeholder involvement. Nevertheless, important challenges persist, particularly regarding implementation, employment precarity and the effective extension of social protection mechanisms throughout the cultural sector.

4.1.4 Tax laws

Tax policy in Spain has played a significant role in shaping the cultural sector, particularly in relation to cultural consumption, patronage and the economic sustainability of artistic activities. During the economic crisis, taxation became a major point of contention following the increase in Value Added Tax (VAT) rates in 2012, which had a substantial impact on cultural goods and services. The rise in VAT—especially affecting live performances and cinema admissions—generated strong opposition from the sector and prompted widespread debate on the effects of fiscal policy on cultural participation and sustainability.

Subsequent reforms gradually reversed these measures. VAT rates for live performances, cinema admissions, and services provided by performers, artists, directors and technicians were progressively reduced from 21% to the reduced rate of 10%. Printed books, newspapers and magazines continued to benefit from the super-reduced 4% VAT rate, while certain services related to copyright remuneration remained exempt. These adjustments reflect increasing recognition of culture as a sector requiring differentiated fiscal treatment due to its social and economic specificities.

More recently, tax policy has been linked to the broader implementation of the *Artist's Statute*, with reforms aimed at adapting fiscal frameworks to the intermittent and unstable nature of artistic work. Measures adopted in 2023 introduced changes to withholding tax regimes and

other instruments in order to better align taxation with sectoral income structures. These include reduced personal income tax withholding rates for cultural professionals, measures facilitating compatibility between artistic activity and retirement income, and adaptations designed to accommodate fluctuating earnings. Together, these reforms seek to reduce administrative burdens and improve the coherence between labour and fiscal systems.

Fiscal incentives for cultural patronage constitute another key component of tax policy. The legal framework established by *49/2002 Act on Tax Exemptions for Non-profit making Organisations and on Sponsorship* provides tax benefits for donations supporting cultural and public-interest activities. Following sustained debate on strengthening this framework, reforms introduced through *Royal Decree-Law 6/2023* enhanced these incentives by increasing deduction rates for individual donations and improving conditions for recurring contributions, with the aim of encouraging more stable private support for culture.

Tax incentives have also been used to support strategic cultural sectors, particularly audiovisual production and performing arts. In recent years, fiscal deductions for film production and international shooting have been progressively expanded, including enhanced corporate tax incentives and complementary regional schemes in territories such as the Canary Islands, Navarre and the Basque Country. These measures form part of broader strategies to enhance Spain's competitiveness and position as an international hub for audiovisual production.

At the same time, cultural tax policy reflects Spain's multi-level governance structure. Several Autonomous Communities have developed their own frameworks for patronage and sponsorship, complementing national legislation. Notable examples include Navarre (*Foral Law 8/2014 on the tax regime of cultural patronage and tax incentives in culture*), Valencia (*20/2018 Act on cultural, scientific and non-professional sports patronage in the Valencian Community*), and the Balearic Islands (*3/2015 Act regulating cultural consumption and cultural, scientific and technological development patronage, and establishing tax measures*), all of which introduce tax incentives for cultural investment and donations. These initiatives illustrate the growing role of regional governments in shaping cultural financing mechanisms.

Overall, recent developments indicate a transition from crisis-driven fiscal adjustments towards a more strategic approach linking taxation to cultural policy objectives. Nevertheless, challenges remain in ensuring policy coordination, the long-term sustainability of incentives, and the adaptation of fiscal systems to evolving patterns of cultural production and participation.

4.1.5 Labour laws

Spain has traditionally lacked a comprehensive labour framework specifically designed for artists and cultural workers. In response to long-standing demands from the sector, recent efforts have focused on developing a more coherent regulatory approach through the progressive implementation of the *Artist's Statute*. Since the publication of the Parliamentary

Subcommittee report in 2018, a gradual process of reform has sought to adapt labour and employment systems to the particular conditions of artistic work, characterised by intermittency, project-based employment and fluctuating income patterns.

A specific legal regime for performing artists has nevertheless existed for several decades. The Workers' Statute (*Royal Legislative Decree 2/2015, approving the consolidated text of the Workers' Statute Act*) establishes special provisions for artistic work under Article 2.1(e), which governs the special employment relationship of artists engaged in public performances. Conceived as a flexible and non-exhaustive framework, this regime sets out general principles while leaving many aspects of working conditions to be determined through collective bargaining.

This regime was substantially updated through *Royal Decree-Law 5/2022*, one of the central reforms associated with the *Artist's Statute*. The reform broadened the scope of the special employment relationship to include technical and auxiliary personnel involved in artistic production, while introducing measures to improve labour protection and better align contractual arrangements with contemporary production practices, particularly in the audiovisual and performing arts sectors. It also addressed structural issues such as the widespread use of inappropriate self-employment arrangements.

Further developments followed with *Royal Decree-Law 1/2023*, which introduced a specific unemployment protection scheme for artists and cultural workers with intermittent careers. This reform aimed to facilitate access to unemployment benefits for workers whose contribution histories diverge from standard employment patterns. Additional measures included adjustments to social security contributions and improvements in the compatibility between employment, social protection and discontinuous professional trajectories.

Collective bargaining continues to play an important role in regulating labour conditions across cultural sectors. At state level, agreements have long existed in areas such as audiovisual production, performing arts, publishing and related industries. At the level of the Autonomous Communities, additional sectoral agreements have developed in regions including Catalonia, Madrid, Galicia, the Balearic Islands, La Rioja and Navarre, reflecting the territorial diversity of labour regulation.

General labour legislation also applies to cultural workers, including *Law 3/2023 on Employment*, which establishes the broader framework for labour market policies and access to employment. However, structural challenges persist. Irregular employment patterns, temporary contracts and periods of inactivity continue to generate legal uncertainty and labour disputes. These issues have been particularly visible in public cultural institutions, such as the National Institute for Performing Arts and Music (INAEM), where tensions related to temporary employment and project-based work have highlighted the limitations of conventional labour categories.

Overall, recent reforms indicate a gradual transition from fragmented and sector-specific regulation towards a more integrated and sector-sensitive labour framework, increasingly

recognising the distinctive characteristics of cultural employment. Nevertheless, challenges remain in terms of implementation, institutional coordination and the adaptation of labour regulations to evolving forms of cultural production and work.

4.1.6 Copyright provisions

Copyright regulation in Spain has undergone significant transformation in recent decades in response to digitalisation, technological change and evolving cultural markets, while seeking to balance the protection of creators with broader access to culture. The current framework is based on the revised text of the *Intellectual Property Act (Royal Legislative Decree 1/1996)*, which consolidated and systematised copyright law and continues to serve as the central legal instrument in this field.

Subsequent reforms progressively adapted this framework to new digital environments. *Law 23/2006* introduced changes to transpose European legislation and strengthen the protection of authors and rights holders while maintaining access to cultural works. Growing concerns regarding online piracy led to further modifications through *Law 2/2011 on Sustainable Economy*, which reinforced administrative enforcement mechanisms and strengthened the role of the Intellectual Property Commission, responsible for mediation, arbitration and enforcement in copyright matters.

Additional reforms were introduced by *Law 21/2014*, which enhanced oversight of collective management organisations, expanded tools to combat digital infringements and revised rules on private copying. The reform also transposed European regulations on performers' rights and orphan works, while introducing provisions on content aggregation and publishers' remuneration in digital environments.

Compensation for private copying has been a particularly contested area. The traditional system based on levies on recording devices and media—the so-called “digital canon”—was abolished in 2011 and replaced by compensation financed through the State budget. Subsequent legal and European-level developments led to further adjustments, and current arrangements place responsibility primarily on manufacturers and distributors of reproduction equipment, while exempting certain professional and public uses.

More recent reforms have been strongly influenced by European Union legislation and digital market regulation. *Royal Decree-Law 2/2018* incorporated EU provisions on collective rights management and improved access to copyrighted works for persons with visual disabilities. A major step followed with *Royal Decree-Law 24/2021*, which transposed the Directive on Copyright in the Digital Single Market (EU) 2019/790 and the Directive on online transmissions and retransmissions (EU) 2019/789. These reforms introduced new rules concerning platform responsibilities, press publishers' rights, text and data mining exceptions, and mechanisms to improve remuneration and bargaining conditions for creators in digital environments.

Collective management organisations continue to play a central role in the administration of copyright and related rights, although their activities have been subject to increasing regulatory oversight in response to concerns about transparency, governance and accountability. Copyright policy has thus evolved beyond traditional authors' rights protection to encompass broader issues related to platform regulation, digital ecosystems and equitable remuneration.

While copyright legislation remains an exclusive competence of the central government, several Autonomous Communities—including Andalusia, Aragon, Asturias, Catalonia, Extremadura, Galicia, La Rioja, Madrid, Murcia, the Basque Country, and Valencia—exercise certain administrative functions, particularly through the management of territorial branches of the Intellectual Property Register. This framework was updated by *Royal Decree 611/2023*, which modernised registration procedures, strengthened coordination between central and regional authorities and adapted the system to contemporary administrative and digital requirements.

4.1.7 Data protection laws

The legal framework governing personal data protection in Spain has undergone significant transformation in recent years, largely driven by broader European reforms in data governance and digital rights. Earlier legislation, based on *Organic Law 15/1999 on Personal Data Protection* and its implementing regulation (*Royal Decree 1720/2007*), has been replaced by a new framework aligned with European Union law.

The current system is primarily based on the General Data Protection Regulation (Regulation (EU) 2016/679 – GDPR), which became directly applicable in 2018, together with *Organic Law 3/2018 on Personal Data Protection and the Guarantee of Digital Rights*. This law adapts the European framework to the Spanish context while introducing additional provisions related to digital citizenship and online rights.

The reform significantly broadened the scope of data protection beyond traditional privacy concerns. In addition to regulating the collection and processing of personal data, *Organic Law 3/2018* introduced a catalogue of “digital rights”, including provisions related to internet neutrality, digital education, the right to disconnect in digital work environments, the protection of minors online, and the handling of personal data in digital contexts. It also consolidated core data protection rights—such as access, rectification, erasure, restriction of processing, portability and objection—reflecting the evolution of earlier legal frameworks.

The Spanish Data Protection Agency remains the principal supervisory authority, responsible for ensuring compliance, enforcing regulations and promoting public awareness. In parallel, regional supervisory bodies operate in specific territorial contexts—particularly in Catalonia, Madrid and the Basque Country—within a coordinated national and European system.

Data protection legislation has a direct impact on cultural institutions and services, including libraries, museums, archives, theatres and digital cultural platforms. Issues such as audience

management systems, user registration, digital services and communication strategies are increasingly shaped by requirements concerning consent, data processing and privacy. The expansion of digital cultural participation and the use of audience analytics have further reinforced the importance of compliance with data protection standards.

At the same time, data protection regulation operates alongside broader policies promoting transparency and access to public information. *Law 19/2013 on Transparency, Access to Public Information and Good Governance* strengthened citizens' rights to access public information while requiring a continuous balance between transparency obligations and the protection of personal data. These tensions have become particularly relevant in the context of digital public administration and the increasing availability of cultural and administrative data online.

4.1.8 Language laws

The regulation of multilingualism in Spain constitutes one of the most distinctive and complex dimensions of its constitutional and cultural framework. The cornerstone of this system is the *1978 Constitution*, which establishes Castilian as the official language of the State (Article 3.1), while recognising that other Spanish languages may be official in their respective Autonomous Communities in accordance with their Statutes of Autonomy (Article 3.2). Linguistic diversity is further recognised as part of Spain's cultural heritage, deserving special protection (Article 3.3). This constitutional design combines the general official status of Castilian with the territorial recognition of linguistic plurality.

This framework has enabled the development of extensive regional language legislation. Autonomous Communities with co-official languages have adopted laws regulating linguistic normalisation, language rights, and the use of languages in public administration, education, media, and cultural life. Key examples include the *Basque Law 10/1982 on the Normalisation of the Use of Euskera*, the *Galician Law 3/1983 on Linguistic Normalisation*, the *Valencian Law 4/1983 on the Use and Teaching of Valencian*, the *Navarre Foral Law 18/1986 on Basque*, the *Balearic Law 3/1986 on Linguistic Normalisation*, the *Catalan Law 1/1998 on Linguistic Policy*. Other regions, such as Asturias (*Law 1/1998*) and Aragon (*Law 3/2013*), have introduced measures to protect and promote regional languages without granting them co-official status. Together, these frameworks have resulted in a highly decentralised system of language governance, with Autonomous Communities exercising extensive regulatory competences.

At the same time, the central government retains authority in areas where language policy intersects with broader state competences, including education frameworks, judicial administration, public services, audiovisual regulation, and citizens' relations with public authorities. As a result, language policy in Spain is characterised by continuous interaction between state and regional levels.

The implementation of multilingual policies has been accompanied by sustained

constitutional and judicial interpretation. Early Constitutional Court judgments (82/1986, 83/1986 and 84/1986) established foundational principles governing the coexistence of Castilian and co-official languages, recognising linguistic diversity as a constitutional value and confirming shared responsibilities between levels of government. Subsequent jurisprudence has continued to shape the balance between language promotion policies and constitutional principles relating to equality, official status and citizens' rights.

More recently, language regulation in education has remained a particularly dynamic area, subject to legislative developments and judicial oversight. In Catalonia, for example, reforms adopted in 2022 and 2024, alongside rulings from the High Court of Justice of Catalonia, have addressed the role of languages in the education system and illustrate the ongoing adjustment of regulatory frameworks within the broader constitutional context.

Language legislation also has direct implications for cultural policy and cultural industries. In Catalonia, the *Law on Linguistic Policy* (1998) and subsequent audiovisual regulations introduced measures aimed at promoting the use of Catalan in media and cultural production, including incentives and regulatory provisions affecting broadcasting, music, publishing and audiovisual sectors. Similar approaches have been developed in other Autonomous Communities, reflecting the close relationship between language policy and broader objectives related to cultural diversity, identity and cultural development.

4.1.9 Other areas of general legislation

Several areas of general legislation increasingly influence cultural policy in Spain by introducing cross-cutting principles that shape the functioning of cultural institutions and activities. These legal frameworks operate beyond sector-specific cultural regulation, contributing to the integration of broader social, economic and governance objectives into cultural policy.

Gender equality represents a key dimension. *Organic Law 3/2007 on the effective equality of women and men* established a transversal obligation for public authorities to promote equal treatment and opportunities across all policy domains, including culture. Its principles have progressively been incorporated into cultural policies through measures aimed at promoting gender equality, balanced representation and inclusion within cultural sectors. In the audiovisual field, this orientation has been reinforced by *Law 7/2010 on Audiovisual Communication*—later replaced by *Law 13/2022*—which includes provisions to prevent discrimination and promote equality in media content, building on earlier frameworks such as *Organic Law 1/2004 on Integrated Protection Measures against Gender Violence*.

Science and knowledge dissemination policies also play an important role. *Law 14/2011 on Science, Technology and Innovation* strengthened the importance of scientific communication and public engagement with knowledge. This framework has enabled cultural institutions—such as museums, archives and heritage organisations—to participate more actively in research, innovation and outreach activities, as well as to access public funding for scientific

dissemination. As a result, these institutions increasingly operate at the intersection of culture, education and research.

4.2 Legislation on culture

4.2.1 General legislation on culture

The Spanish Constitution of 1978 does not include a specific chapter devoted exclusively to cultural policy. However, several provisions establish the fundamental principles of Spain's cultural framework. Article 44.1 recognises the responsibility of public authorities to promote and guarantee access to culture, while Article 46 mandates the conservation and protection of the historical, cultural and artistic heritage. Other constitutional provisions—such as those relating to linguistic diversity, education, media and the distribution of competences between the State and the Autonomous Communities—also have significant implications for cultural policy.

Spain does not have a comprehensive framework law governing culture as a whole. Instead, cultural regulation has developed through a combination of constitutional principles, sector-specific legislation and a highly decentralised system of competences shared between different levels of government. This arrangement reflects the broader territorial organisation of the State, in which the Autonomous Communities exercise extensive powers in cultural matters, while the central administration retains responsibilities in areas of general coordination, international representation and certain regulatory domains.

The organisation and competences of the central cultural administration are defined through successive regulatory instruments establishing the structure of the Ministry responsible for culture. The current institutional framework is set out in *Royal Decree 323/2024*, which establishes the basic organisational structure of the Ministry of Culture, defines its areas of responsibility and regulates its internal organisation.

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

Title of the international legal instrument	Year of adoption
<i>Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works</i>	1887 (Spain became Member)
<i>Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)</i>	Signed in 1945
<i>Universal Copyright Convention</i>	Ratified in 1954
<i>Agreement on the Importation of Educational, Scientific and Cultural Materials</i>	Acceded in 1955
<i>European Cultural Convention</i>	Ratified in 1957
<i>Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict</i>	Ratified in 1960
<i>Convention concerning the international exchange of publications</i>	Ratified in 1963
<i>European Agreement on the Protection of Television Broadcasts</i>	Acceded and entry into force in 1971
<i>Agreement concerning Programme Exchanges by means of Television Films</i>	Acceded in 1973 and entry into force in 1974
<i>Convention for the Protection of Producers of Phonograms Against Unauthorised Duplication of Their Phonograms</i>	Ratified in 1974
<i>Universal Copyright Convention as revised at Paris on 24 July 1971</i>	Ratified in 1974
<i>European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage</i>	Acceded in 1975
<i>Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage</i>	Accepted in 1982
<i>Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe</i>	Signed in 1985. Ratified and entry into force in 1989.
<i>Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property</i>	Ratified in 1986
<i>Ibero-American Film Integration Agreement</i>	Signed in 1989 and entry into force in 1991
<i>Latin American Film Coproduction Agreement</i>	Signed in 1989 and entry into force in 1992
<i>European Convention on Transfrontier Television</i>	Signed in 1989. Ratified and entry into force in 1998.
<i>International Convention for the Protection of Performers, Producers of Phonograms and Broadcasting Organisations</i>	Acceded in 1991
<i>European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages</i>	Signed in 1992. Ratified and entry into force in 2001
<i>European Convention on Cinematographic Co-Production</i>	Signed in 1994. Ratified in 1996 and entry into force in 1997
<i>European Convention relating to Questions on Copyright Law and Neighbouring Rights in the Framework of Transfrontier Broadcasting by Satellite</i>	Signed in 1994
<i>WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty</i>	Signed in 1996. Ratified in 2009 and entry into force in 2010
<i>European Landscape Convention</i>	Signed in 2000. Ratified in 2007 and entry into force in 2008
<i>Convention on Cybercrime</i>	Signed in 2001. Ratified and entry into force in 2010
<i>UNIDROIT Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects</i>	Acceded in 2002
<i>Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage</i>	Signed in 2011. Ratified in 2005 and entry into force in 2009
<i>Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage</i>	Ratified in 2006
<i>Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions</i>	Ratified in 2006
<i>WIPO Copyright Treaty</i>	Ratified in 2009 and entry into force in 2010
<i>Beijing Treaty on Audiovisual Performances</i>	Spain became a Member in 2012
<i>Faro Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society</i>	Signed in 2005. Spain ratified 2022

4.2.2 Legislation on culture & natural heritage

Article 46 of the 1978 Constitution assigns public authorities the responsibility to “guarantee the preservation and promote the enrichment of the historical, cultural and artistic heritage of the peoples of Spain”. This constitutional mandate extends beyond conservation to include the active development and transmission of cultural heritage.

In implementation of this principle, *Law 16/1985 on Spanish Historical Heritage* was adopted as the cornerstone of the national legal framework. The law was further developed by *Royal Decree 111/1986*, which established implementing procedures and protection mechanisms. This framework combines state responsibilities with those of the Autonomous Communities, in line with Spain’s decentralised territorial system. While the central government retains competences in areas such as State-owned heritage, export control and international obligations, the Autonomous Communities exercise extensive powers in heritage protection and management.

As a result, all Autonomous Communities have developed their own legislative frameworks. Examples include *Law 9/1993 on Catalan Cultural Heritage* and *Law 4/1998 on Valencian Cultural Heritage*, as well as more recent legislation such as *Law 8/2022 on the Cultural Heritage of the Balearic Islands*, which incorporates broader concepts including cultural landscapes, intangible heritage, sustainability, and participatory approaches, and *Law 4/2026 on the Cultural Heritage of Andalusia*. These developments reflect a gradual shift from a predominantly monument-based model towards a more comprehensive understanding of heritage that encompasses both tangible and intangible dimensions.

Heritage protection systems typically combine administrative instruments—such as designation procedures, conservation obligations, inventories, export restrictions and sanctioning mechanisms—with financial support measures, including public investment programmes such as the “2% cultural” programme, which contributes to the financing of conservation and restoration projects.

A central feature of both national and regional legislation is the classification of protected assets. At the national level, *Law 16/1985* distinguishes between Assets of Cultural Interest [Bienes de Interés Cultural – BIC] and assets included in general inventories, a model widely adopted across regional frameworks. Heritage protection is also closely linked to urban planning legislation, integrating conservation objectives into territorial development policies.

Cultural institutions such as museums, archives and libraries form an integral part of the broader heritage system, although their regulation has increasingly developed through specialised legislation. In the field of archives, *Royal Decree 1708/2011* established the Spanish Archives System and strengthened coordination and access within the General State Administration. Autonomous Communities have similarly adopted specific legislation for museums and archives, such as *Law 8/2007 on Museums and Collections of Catalonia*.

In response to evolving conceptions of heritage, legislative developments have expanded the

scope of protection. *Law 10/2015 on the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage* introduced mechanisms for recognising and protecting intangible practices, particularly those shared across regions. In addition, *Law 18/2013 regulating bullfighting as cultural heritage* recognised bullfighting within the heritage framework, generating significant legal and institutional debate.

Despite these advances, the need to modernise *Law 16/1985* has been widely acknowledged in academic and policy discussions, although a comprehensive revision of the national framework has not yet been completed.

In parallel, natural heritage is governed by *Law 42/2007 on Natural Heritage and Biodiversity*, which establishes the legal framework for conservation, sustainable use and restoration of the natural environment. Subsequent amendments have aligned this framework with European environmental legislation and international sustainability commitments, reinforcing the integration of biodiversity protection into broader environmental policies.

4.2.3 Legislation on performance and celebration

Music and the performing arts have long constituted a central area of public cultural policy in Spain. At the state level, the institutional framework has traditionally centred on the National Institute for the Performing Arts and Music (INAEM), created in 1985 and consolidated by *Royal Decree 565/1985*. INAEM remains responsible for the promotion of theatre, music, dance and circus, as well as for the management of major national artistic institutions.

The legal basis of INAEM originates in Article 87.3 of *Law 50/1984 on the General State Budget for 1985*, while its structure and functions were further defined by *Royal Decree 2491/1996*. This framework has evolved over time through successive administrative reforms reflecting changing priorities in cultural policy and sectoral needs.

The most recent reform was introduced through *Royal Decree 1028/2025*, which modifies the organisational structure and functions of INAEM and forms part of a broader restructuring of the Ministry of Culture. This reform establishes a clearer distinction between policy design and operational management, transferring strategic functions to the Directorate-General for Performing Arts and Music, while INAEM continues to focus on programme management, production and implementation.

This reorganisation represents the first phase of a broader modernisation process aimed at improving administrative efficiency and strengthening sectoral specialisation. At the same time, it maintains an integrated approach to the performing arts value chain. The reform seeks to address key policy priorities, including the promotion of artistic creation, the consolidation of stable exhibition circuits, audience development and the internationalisation of Spanish performing arts. It also responds to longstanding sectoral demands, such as increasing the visibility of dance and recognising circus as a distinct artistic discipline.

Alongside institutional reforms, earlier regulatory developments have sought to enhance participation and transparency. *Royal Decree 497/2010* regulates the State Council for the Performing Arts and Music and its sectoral councils (music, theatre, dance and circus), reinforcing the involvement of professional communities in advisory and decision-making processes. In addition, *Order CUL/3520/2008*, approving the Code of Good Practices for INAEM, introduced principles of transparency, merit-based selection and participation in the governance of public cultural institutions.

Recent reforms linked to the implementation of the *Artist's Statute*—particularly Royal Decree-Law 5/2022—have also impacted the performing arts sector by adapting labour and social security frameworks to the specific characteristics of artistic work, thereby affecting professional conditions across the field.

Finally, performing arts policy is shaped by Spain's decentralised governance system. The Autonomous Communities exercise extensive competences through their own legislation and public agencies. Examples include *Law 2/1998 on Music of the Valencian Community*, which promotes and coordinates musical activity, and *Law 4/2008 establishing the Galician Agency for Cultural Industries* (AGADIC), which created a public body dedicated to supporting the performing arts and cultural industries in Galicia. These frameworks illustrate the significant role of regional authorities in fostering performing arts creation, production, distribution, and institutional development.

4.2.4 Legislation on visual arts and crafts

The legal framework affecting visual arts and crafts in Spain has largely developed through broader cultural and heritage legislation rather than through a specific state law devoted exclusively to the sector.

A key reference is *Law 16/1985 on Spanish Historical Heritage*, which introduced measures that, while primarily aimed at heritage protection, also have implications for artistic creation and the visual arts sector. Among these, the law allows for the settlement of certain tax obligations through the transfer of artworks and cultural assets to public authorities, thereby contributing to the enrichment of public collections.

The same legal framework has also supported investment mechanisms in heritage and cultural promotion. The so-called “1% cultural programme”, originally linked to public investment in infrastructure, has undergone successive expansions—first to 1.5% and more recently to 2% through *Law 14/2021*, which amended earlier measures adopted during the COVID-19 period. While this programme has primarily financed conservation and restoration projects, it also allocates a proportion of resources to artistic creation, cultural promotion and support for the visual arts sector.

At the regional level, more specific policy frameworks have been developed. Autonomous Communities have exercised their cultural competences to create instruments tailored to local artistic ecosystems. A notable example is Catalonia, where *Decree 60/2020*, amended in

2023, established the Public System of Visual Arts Facilities, a coordinated network aimed at supporting the production, dissemination and territorial organisation of contemporary visual arts.

4.2.5 Legislation on books and press

Books, libraries and reading policies in Spain are regulated through a combination of heritage legislation, sector-specific laws and regional frameworks, reflecting the country's decentralised governance structure. Initially, libraries were incorporated within the broader heritage framework established by *Law 16/1985 on Spanish Historical Heritage*, which recognised them as part of the cultural heritage and established basic principles governing their protection, organisation and public access.

At the regional level, this framework was progressively complemented by specific legislation. Examples include *Law 4/1993 on the Library System of Catalonia*, *Law 5/1999 on the Book of the Community of Madrid*, *Law 3/2002 on Books of the Valencian Community*, and *Law 17/2006 on Books and Reading of Galicia*. These laws regulate library networks, promote reading policies and support the publishing and bookselling sectors.

At the state level, the legal framework was substantially strengthened with the adoption of *Law 10/2007 on Reading, Books and Libraries*, which established a comprehensive regulatory framework. The law aims to promote reading, support cultural diversity and protect the publishing ecosystem, while adapting the concept of books to technological developments. It maintains the fixed-price system for books and introduces measures such as public lending rights and institutional mechanisms like the Observatory for Reading and Books.

This framework was complemented by *Royal Decree 2063/2008*, which adapted the ISBN system to evolving publishing practices and transferred its management to the publishing sector, reflecting changes in the organisation of the industry.

The legal framework was further modernised through *Law 23/2011 on Legal Deposit*, developed by *Royal Decree 635/2015*, which expanded deposit obligations to digital publications and new forms of publishing. These reforms respond to broader transformations associated with digitisation and the growth of electronic publishing.

The institutional framework has also evolved. The National Library of Spain was restructured through *Law 1/2015*, subsequently developed by *Royal Decree 640/2016*, strengthening its autonomy and clarifying its role in preserving, managing and disseminating Spain's bibliographic and documentary heritage.

4.2.6 Legislation on audiovisual and interactive media

The legal framework governing audiovisual and interactive media in Spain combines sector-specific legislation, media regulation, cultural policy objectives and regional initiatives. A central reference remains *Law 55/2007 on Cinema*, adopted to promote cinematographic and audiovisual production, distribution, exhibition and preservation. The law recognises

audiovisual creation as both a cultural and economic activity and establishes support mechanisms for the sector, including public subsidies and measures to safeguard audiovisual heritage.

This framework has been progressively adapted to technological change, European State aid rules and evolving industry structures. In particular, *Royal Decree 1084/2015*, replacing *Royal Decree 2062/2008*, updated the legal regime governing state support for audiovisual production and modernised subsidy procedures. Responsibility for cinema policy lies with the Institute of Cinematography and Audiovisual Arts (ICAA), created by *Royal Decree 325/1984*, which continues to manage public support schemes and coordinate audiovisual policy.

More recently, further reform initiatives have been developed through the proposed Law on Cinema and Audiovisual Culture, aimed at establishing a more comprehensive framework for the sector. These proposals seek to strengthen support across the audiovisual value chain, expand eligibility to new formats such as series and digital productions, and reinforce objectives related to gender equality, cultural diversity, heritage protection and transparency.

A major reform of the broader audiovisual sector was introduced by *Law 13/2022 on General Audiovisual Communication*, which replaced most provisions of *Law 7/2010*. This legislation adapts the regulatory framework to digital environments and on-demand services, extending obligations beyond traditional broadcasters to include video-sharing platforms and other digital service providers. It also maintains provisions to promote European and Spanish audiovisual works and to protect cultural and linguistic diversity.

Public service broadcasting continues to be governed by *Law 17/2006 on State-owned Radio and Television*, which transformed RTVE into a public corporation with obligations relating to public service, cultural diversity, territorial cohesion and the promotion of Spain's linguistic plurality.

Spain's decentralised governance system has also generated extensive regional legislation. Examples include *Law 20/2010 on Cinema of Catalonia*, which regulates production, distribution, exhibition and language promotion; *Law 6/1999 on the Audiovisual Sector of Galicia*; and *Law 1/2006 on the Audiovisual Sector of the Valencian Community*. In addition, several Autonomous Communities have established specialised regulatory authorities, such as the Catalan Audiovisual Council (*Law 2/2000*) and the Andalusian Audiovisual Council (*Law 1/2004*), reflecting the development of dedicated regulatory institutions within Spain's multilevel governance framework.

4.2.7 Legislation on design and creative services

The legal framework governing design and creative services in Spain is primarily articulated through industrial and intellectual property legislation rather than through a specific sectoral

law. Legal protection covers a wide range of creative and commercial assets and combines national, European, and international frameworks.

Design protection is principally regulated by *Law 20/2003 on the Legal Protection of Industrial Design*, which safeguards the appearance and visual characteristics of products. This legislation operates alongside broader industrial property regimes that protect other forms of innovation and distinctive creation.

Other key components of the framework include *Law 17/2001 on Trademarks*, substantially amended by *Royal Decree-Law 23/2018* to transpose European Union legislation and modernise registration procedures; and *Law 24/2015 on Patents*, which governs patents and utility models.

Responsibility for administering industrial property rights lies with the Spanish Patent and Trademark Office (OEPM), which oversees registration procedures and promotes innovation and the protection of intangible assets. At the European level, Spain hosts the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) in Alicante, reinforcing the country's role within the European system of intellectual property governance.

The legal framework affecting design and creative services increasingly intersects with broader legislation on copyright, digital markets, and the professional conditions of cultural and creative workers, including reforms associated with the implementation of the *Artist's Statute*. This evolution reflects the growing recognition of intangible assets and the cultural and creative industries as strategic components of Spain's knowledge-based economy.

5. Arts and cultural education

5.1 Policy and institutional overview

One of the longstanding challenges in Spain has been the integration of arts and cultural education into the general education system, both in terms of professional artistic training and the promotion of cultural participation among broader audiences. The place of artistic disciplines within compulsory education has historically been shaped by successive reforms and ongoing debates concerning curriculum content, teaching hours, and the balance between common state standards and regional autonomy.

Responsibility for education in Spain is organised within a highly decentralised framework, involving both the central government and the Autonomous Communities. The Ministry of Education, Vocational Training and Sports establishes the basic structure of the education system and defines core curricular elements, while the Autonomous Communities exercise extensive competences in implementation, curriculum development and educational management, including in the field of artistic education.

The current policy framework is largely defined by *Organic Law 3/2020 (LOMLOE)*, which amended *Organic Law 2/2006 on Education*. This reform introduced significant changes to the educational model, with a stronger emphasis on competency-based learning, creativity, cultural awareness and artistic expression. It also reinforces interdisciplinary approaches across educational stages, positioning arts and culture within broader objectives related to inclusion, citizenship and personal development.

Alongside general education, Spain maintains a structured system of specialised artistic education, covering disciplines such as music, dance, dramatic arts, design, conservation and restoration, and visual arts. A major recent development has been the adoption of *Organic Law 1/2024 on Higher Artistic Education*, which establishes a specific legal framework for these studies. The law strengthens their institutional status within both the Spanish education system and the European Higher Education Area, while aiming to improve governance, organisational capacity, research development and internationalisation. It also enhances the academic and professional recognition of artistic qualifications.

Despite these advances, the implementation of arts and cultural education continues to depend significantly on decisions taken at the regional level, including curriculum design, time allocation and institutional priorities. As a result, territorial diversity remains a defining characteristic of the system, leading to variations in the presence and weight of artistic disciplines across different Autonomous Communities.

5.2 Arts in schools

Arts education in Spain is delivered through both the formal education system and a range of complementary initiatives developed by educational administrations, cultural institutions, and civil society organisations. Given the country's decentralised structure, implementation

varies across Autonomous Communities.

The current framework is defined by *Organic Law 3/2020* (LOMLOE), which amended *Organic Law 2/2006* and replaced the previous model established under *Organic Law 8/2013* (LOMCE). This reform strengthened competency-based learning and placed greater emphasis on creativity, cultural awareness, artistic expression and interdisciplinary approaches across all stages of compulsory education.

At the primary education level, arts education is integrated through artistic subjects and cross-curricular competencies, while schools and regional authorities retain considerable flexibility in implementation. In Compulsory Secondary Education (ESO), students may study subjects such as music, visual and audiovisual education, artistic expression and performing arts, depending on curricular choices at regional level. At upper secondary level (Bachillerato), students may choose the Arts modality, which includes pathways in visual arts, music, performing arts and design, and serves as preparation for specialised higher education.

Spain also maintains a broad system of specialised artistic education (*enseñanzas de régimen especial*), including music, dance, dramatic arts, visual arts and design, and conservation and restoration studies. According to the *Cultural Statistics Yearbook 2025*, in the 2024–2025 academic year enrolment in these programmes reached 385 911 students, representing a slight decrease (1%) compared to the previous year. The majority of students (82.6%) were enrolled in music studies, followed by visual arts and design (8.3%), dance (8.1%), dramatic arts (0.7%), and master's-level artistic education programmes (0.3%).

Within general regime education, in the 2023–2024 academic year 38 189 students were enrolled in the Arts track of upper secondary education (5.7% of total enrolment at this level), while 31,848 students participated in vocational training programmes related to the cultural sector (3.5% of total enrolment in vocational education).

In addition to curricular provision, several national initiatives aim to strengthen links between culture and education. The *Plan Nacional de Educación* [Patrimonial National Heritage Education Plan] promotes research, innovation and collaboration in heritage education, supporting training and knowledge exchange among educators and cultural professionals. Another example is *AulaCorto*, a platform developed by the Institute of Cinematography and Audiovisual Arts (ICAA), which provides teachers with free access to curated short films to facilitate the integration of audiovisual content into classroom practice.

Beyond formal education, collaboration between schools, cultural institutions and the third sector plays an increasingly important role. Museums, cultural centres, foundations and artistic organisations develop educational programmes, mediation initiatives and partnerships aimed at expanding access to artistic experiences. In recent years, artist residencies in schools have gained visibility as innovative approaches to integrating artistic practice into teaching and learning processes, as illustrated by programmes promoted by institutions such as TEA Tenerife Espacio de las Artes and various local and private initiatives.

5.3 Higher arts and cultural education

Higher arts education in Spain is organised within a dual system, combining university education and specialised higher artistic education (enseñanzas artísticas superiores). These specialised institutions operate outside the university framework but are recognised as equivalent to university-level qualifications within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). They provide programmes in disciplines such as music, dance, drama, design, and conservation and restoration, while universities offer degrees in fields including fine arts, audiovisual communication, design, and cultural heritage.

The structure of higher education was reshaped following the implementation of the Bologna Process, which was consolidated in Spain during the late 2000s and early 2010s. This reform introduced a system based on undergraduate (Grado), postgraduate (Máster) and doctoral cycles, organised through ECTS credits and competence-based learning. It facilitated student mobility, comparability of qualifications and the integration of artistic studies into European frameworks. In parallel, universities have expanded interdisciplinary programmes combining artistic practice with theoretical, technological and management-oriented competences. According to the *Cultural Statistics Yearbook 2025*, students enrolled in university programmes (Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral studies) related to cultural professions represented 11.7% of total enrolment in these categories in the 2024–2025 academic year.

A major recent development is the adoption of *Organic Law 1/2024 on Higher Artistic Education*, which establishes a specific legal framework for these studies and strengthens their institutional recognition and autonomy. The reform seeks to improve governance, organisational capacity, research development and internationalisation, while reinforcing the position of higher artistic education within the broader higher education system and aligning it more closely with European standards.

Quality assurance and institutional evaluation are carried out through national and regional structures, most notably the National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation (ANECA) and regional accreditation agencies. These bodies assess academic programmes and institutional performance based on criteria such as learning outcomes, quality standards and organisational effectiveness.

Spain offers a wide range of programmes oriented towards the cultural and creative industries, reflecting the growing professionalisation of the sector. Academic provision includes degrees and master's programmes in cultural management, audiovisual production, digital creativity, heritage management and related fields. Interdisciplinary programmes linking communication, digital technologies and cultural industries have expanded, strengthening the connection between education, innovation and labour market demands.

The system also incorporates initiatives aimed at the preservation and transmission of intangible cultural heritage. A notable example is the consolidation of Flamenco as a

recognised field within higher music education, contributing to its professionalisation and safeguarding.

Higher artistic education has also incorporated initiatives aimed at preserving and transmitting intangible cultural heritage. A notable example is the consolidation of Flamenco as a recognised area of higher music studies, contributing to the safeguarding and professional transmission of one of Spain's most internationally recognised cultural expressions.

5.4 Out-of-school arts & cultural education

Out-of-school arts and cultural education in Spain is characterised by a highly decentralised and diverse landscape involving educational authorities, local governments, cultural institutions, philanthropic organisations, and civil society actors. Decisions regarding extracurricular artistic activities are generally taken at the local and school level, with schools enjoying considerable autonomy in designing programmes, often supported financially by Autonomous Communities or municipalities.

Municipalities play a central role through extensive networks of public music schools, dance schools, theatre schools, and arts centres. These institutions provide voluntary artistic education outside compulsory curricula and often constitute the main point of access to artistic practice for children and young people. Although no single national framework regulates this field, Autonomous Communities typically establish standards concerning organisation, educational objectives, and accreditation, resulting in diverse territorial models. Regional legislation governing music schools in Catalonia or artistic education institutions in Andalusia illustrates these different approaches.

Cultural institutions have become increasingly important providers of out-of-school arts and cultural education. Museums, libraries, archives, theatres, and cultural centres regularly offer programmes targeting children, families, schools, and wider audiences. These initiatives increasingly extend beyond traditional guided visits to include workshops, mediation activities, participatory projects, artist residencies, digital learning formats, and community-based practices.

Within this context, structured collaborations among cultural institutions are gaining relevance. A notable example is [laCultivadora](https://www.lacultivadora.cat/), a joint educational initiative promoted by six major performing arts and music institutions in Catalonia (L'Auditori, Gran Teatre del Liceu, Mercat de les Flors, Palau de la Música Catalana, Teatre Nacional de Catalunya, and Teatre Lliure). Conceived as a shared platform to strengthen the relationship between live arts and education, it integrates performances, workshops, educational itineraries, and teacher training within a coordinated framework.

At the national level, institutions coordinated by the Ministry of Culture have also strengthened their educational role. State museums and cultural centres increasingly incorporate educational and mediation activities into their core missions. Family-oriented

programmes, workshops, and initiatives such as Tabacalera/Educa seek to connect cultural participation with informal learning, artistic experimentation, and community engagement.

Within this broader trend, museums increasingly function as educational and social infrastructures, developing dedicated mediation and outreach programmes. Major institutions such as the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía and the Museo Nacional del Prado, alongside numerous regional museums, have expanded activities addressing schools, intergenerational audiences, and socially vulnerable groups. Similar approaches can also be found in libraries, film archives, and performing arts organisations.

Civil society and philanthropic organisations also play a significant role in the field. Initiatives such as the Citizen Art projects supported by the Daniel and Nina Carasso Foundation, the Responsible Education programme developed by the Botín Foundation, and community-based projects promoted by the Cerezales Antonino y Cinia Foundation illustrate the diversity of approaches. Recent mappings—such as the report *Programas y actividades de educación y mediación cultural para comunidades educativas* [Programmes and Activities in Cultural Education and Mediation for Educational Communities]—highlight the growing importance of cultural mediation programmes that foster creativity, participation, critical thinking, and social cohesion through collaborative practices.

5.5 Vocational and professional training

Vocational Education and Training (VET) represents a complementary pathway into the cultural and creative sectors. The system includes intermediate and advanced programmes in areas such as graphic arts, audiovisual production, crafts, design, fashion and cultural services. Reforms linked to *Organic Law 3/2022 on the organisation and integration of Vocational Training* have aimed to modernise the system, strengthen links with labour market needs and expand work-based learning opportunities.

In the field of heritage, specialised training is provided both within and outside formal education structures. National institutions such as the Institute of Cultural Heritage of Spain offer training through initiatives such as the School of Historical Heritage, while regional organisations—including institutions like the Andalusian Institute of Historical Heritage—provide continuous professional development in conservation, restoration and heritage management.

Finally, lifelong learning plays an important role in the professional development of cultural practitioners. Universities, professional associations and cultural organisations offer continuing education programmes in areas such as cultural management, heritage conservation and creative industries. Organisations such as the Spanish Federation of Associations of Cultural Managers (FEAGC) and the Spanish Association for Cultural Heritage Management (AEGPC) contribute to training, knowledge exchange and professionalisation across the sector.

6. Cultural Participation & consumption

6.1 Policies & programmes

Promoting cultural participation and access has become an increasingly important objective of Spanish cultural policy, particularly in recent years through the growing emphasis on cultural rights, inclusion, and audience development. These policies are implemented within Spain's multilevel governance system and involve cooperation among the Ministry of Culture, the Autonomous Communities, local authorities, and civil society organisations.

Earlier policy frameworks, such as the *Culture Plan 2020*, sought to broaden participation through the modernisation of cultural infrastructure and the implementation of initiatives aimed at attracting new audiences to museums, cinemas, and performing arts institutions. Since then, programmes focused on cultural mediation, audience development, and access to culture have become increasingly integrated into broader cultural policy strategies.

One of the most significant recent initiatives at the national level is the *Bono Cultural Joven* [Youth Cultural Voucher], introduced in 2022 to encourage cultural participation among young people reaching adulthood through financial support. Initially covering books, performing arts, cinema, music, audiovisual products and digital cultural content, the programme has become one of Spain's most visible measures for reducing economic barriers to participation. In May 2026, a new regulatory framework consolidated the programme as a permanent policy instrument. While maintaining the individual allocation of 400 euro, the reform expanded eligible uses to include cultural training, artistic education and creative materials, reflecting a shift from supporting cultural consumption towards encouraging active participation and creative practice.

In parallel, the Ministry of Culture has reinforced audience development through educational initiatives such as *Cine Escuela* [School Cinema] programme, which promotes cinema attendance among young audiences while fostering audiovisual literacy and critical thinking through school-based activities.

Complementary policies have also been developed for older populations. The *Cine Sénior programme*, now in its third edition, allows people aged 65 and over to attend cinema screenings at reduced prices, supported by public subsidies to exhibitors (*Royal Decree 390/2025*). By combining sectoral support with accessibility measures, the programme links cultural participation to active ageing, inclusion and wellbeing.

Public institutions have also strengthened links between culture and education, with museums, libraries and cultural organisations expanding mediation programmes and partnerships with schools. National initiatives such as the *Plan Nacional de Educación Patrimonial* [National Heritage Education Plan] aim to connect cultural heritage, education and citizenship, reinforcing participation from an early age.

At regional and local levels, numerous programmes promote access through vouchers,

subsidies and audience-development schemes. Examples include *Cultura Jove* [Youth Culture] in Catalonia, offering reduced-price tickets (€5–€20) to young people; *JOBO – Joven Bono Cultural* [JOBO – Youth Cultural Voucher] in Madrid, offering free access to cultural activities for young people; and the *Bizkaiko Kultur Txartela* [Bizkaia Cultural Card] in the Basque Country. These initiatives aim to stimulate participation while fostering long-term cultural habits.

Particularly noteworthy is *Aproxa Cultura* [Close to Culture], initially developed in Catalonia and subsequently extended to other regions. Through partnerships between cultural institutions and social organisations, it facilitates access for vulnerable and socially excluded groups, illustrating the growing role of participation policies in promoting inclusion and social cohesion.

Territorial access remains another key dimension of public policy. Initiatives supporting rural areas, decentralised cultural provision and circulation networks—such as touring programmes for performing arts and cinema dissemination schemes—contribute to reducing geographical inequalities in access to culture.

Digital participation has also become increasingly important. Public cultural institutions have expanded online collections, virtual exhibitions, streaming services and hybrid formats, extending access beyond physical infrastructures. These developments, accelerated during the COVID-19 pandemic, have become structural components of cultural programming and have enabled engagement with more diverse audiences.

More broadly, policy debates have shifted towards understanding participation not only in terms of attendance but as a matter of cultural rights and democratic inclusion. Issues such as minimum cultural provision, territorial inequalities and unequal participation patterns have gained prominence in public debate.

This perspective is reinforced by the *Cultural Rights Plan 2025-2030*, which introduces measures to reduce structural barriers, including studies on participation inequalities, targeted programmes for vulnerable groups, cultural initiatives in prisons, anti-discrimination measures in cultural institutions and the development of a Network of Culture Points, inspired by international models such as Brazil's *Pontos de Cultura* and *Cultura Viva* [Living Culture] programme.

Overall, cultural participation policies in Spain increasingly connect access to culture with broader objectives of citizenship, social cohesion and democratic engagement. Programmes such as *Cultura y Ciudadanía* [Culture and Citizenship] and Spain's participation in *IberCultura Viva* further emphasise the role of culture as a space for community development, participation and cultural democracy.

6.2 Trends & figures in cultural participation

Receptive cultural participation

The *2024-2025 Survey on Cultural Habits and Practices*, based on 16,000 interviews with individuals aged 15 and over, reports the highest levels of cultural consumption in Spain in recent decades, confirming a strong recovery after the decline observed during the COVID-19 pandemic (2021–2022 edition).

With few exceptions—such as music listening, radio consumption, television viewing and reading of daily or sports press—most indicators show higher participation levels than in the previous period.

Watching audiovisual content and listening to music remain the most frequent cultural activities, with monthly participation rates of 81% and 77.8%, respectively. Around 64.9% of the population reported reading at least one book during the year. Visits to heritage and cultural institutions were also significant: 52.1% of the population visited monuments or archaeological sites, while 47.6% attended museums, exhibitions or art galleries (40.6%, 33.9% and 18.5%, respectively). Library use, including digital access, reached 28.6%, whereas visits to archives remained comparatively limited (7.6%).

Attendance at live cultural performances reached 47.1%, with contemporary music concerts (32.1%) and theatre (24.7%) being the most popular. Participation in other forms of performing arts remained lower, including classical music concerts (9.7%), dance (7.2%), circus (6.7%), opera (3.9%) and operetta (1.7%). Cinema attendance stood at 48.5%, exceeding participation levels recorded for most live performance formats.

Compared with the previous edition (2021–2022), recovery has been particularly notable in live performances and cinema, increasing from 19.9% to 47.1% and from 27.7% to 48.5%, respectively. Reading also showed moderate growth, rising from 61.7% to 64.9%, while digital reading continued its upward trend.

Digital consumption has become an increasingly central component of cultural participation. The proportion of households subscribing to digital cultural content platforms reached 74.1%, representing an increase of 14.7 percentage points compared to 2021–2022 and over 20 points compared to 2018–2019.

Table 3: People who participated in or attended a certain cultural activity during the last 12 months in Spain, in % of the population, period 2018-2025

	2018-2019	2021-2022	2024-2025
Activities heavily subsidised by the state			
Museums	40.5	20.1	40.6
Exhibitions	29.8	14.5	33.9
Art galleries	16.0	6.9	18.5
Monuments	49.3	26.4	50.5
Archaeological sites	21.8	11.6	22.8
Archives	7.1	3.5	7.6
Libraries	26.8	18.4	28.6
Theatre	24.5	8.2	24.7
Opera	3.3	0.9	3.9
Zarzuela	1.5	0.4	1.7
Ballet or dance	8.0	2.0	7.2
Circus	7.3	1.6	6.7
Classical music concert	9.4	3.9	9.7
Contemporary music concert	30.1	10.4	32.1
Activities without large public subsidies			
Cinema	57.8	27.7	48.5
To read book unrelated to work or studies	59.5	55.8	58.8
<i>In paper format</i>	61.9	57.8	60.8
<i>In digital format or audiobook</i>	20.2	24.4	29.8
<i>Directly from the Internet</i>	9.9	8.6	14.0
Listen to music (usually listen)	85.8	84.4	77.8
<i>On the computer or directly from the Internet</i>	40.8	43.1	48.1
To read publications (usually read)	76.9	71.1	66.9
<i>Directly from the Internet</i>	42.9	49.0	49.4
Radio	75.4	66.9	56.6
<i>Directly from the Internet</i>	13.3	18.4	18.5
Audiovisual content	61.8	76.2	81.0
<i>Directly from the Internet</i>	22.5	21.6	25.8
Television	90.9	85.0	73.2
<i>Directly from the Internet</i>	13.5	22.6	21.3
Videogames (usually play)	13.8	14.8	19.3

Source: Ministry of Culture (several years) *Survey of Cultural Habits and Practices in Spain*.

Note: Usually means at least once a month

With respect to participant characteristics, the latest survey confirms patterns observed in previous editions. Cultural participation continues to vary significantly by sex. Women report higher levels of engagement in reading (with the exception of professional and press

reading), library use—both physical and online—and visits to museums, exhibitions, and art galleries. Men, by contrast, show higher rates of visits to monuments and archaeological sites. Age also remains a key determinant of participation. Young people display the highest levels of engagement across most cultural activities, including visits to heritage sites, attendance at live performances, reading, library use, and the purchase of cultural goods. Participation, however, declines progressively with age. Educational attainment continues to be the most influential variable, with levels of cultural participation increasing significantly among individuals with higher educational qualifications.

While these findings provide a detailed picture of socio-demographic inequalities in cultural participation, an important limitation concerns the lack of data on the population's country of origin. The *Survey of Cultural Habits and Practices* does not include this variable, restricting the ability to analyse participation patterns among migrant and culturally diverse populations. Although earlier studies examined cultural participation among migrant communities, more recent research on this issue remains limited.

Active cultural participation

The survey also examines the extent to which individuals engage in creative and artistic activities, referred to as active cultural participation. These practices provide important insight into the role of culture beyond consumption, highlighting participation as a form of expression, creativity and everyday cultural engagement.

As shown in Table 4, activities related to the visual arts stand out for their frequency. Photography is the most widespread activity (19.6%), followed by painting or drawing (14.3%) and video creation (9.3%). Writing as a hobby is reported by 6.9% of the population. Participation in musical activities is relatively more limited, with 8.5% of individuals reporting that they play a musical instrument and 1.8% participating in choir singing. In the field of performing arts, 3.8% of the population report practising dance, ballet or similar forms, while 1.3% engage in theatre activities.

As in receptive cultural participation, active practices show significant socio-demographic differences. Sex differences are particularly evident: women report higher participation in activities such as writing (7.9% compared to 5.8% among men) and in visual arts practices such as painting and drawing. In contrast, activities such as playing a musical instrument and video gaming are more prevalent among men. Age also remains a key factor, with younger individuals showing higher levels of participation across most creative activities.

Public support for active cultural participation—particularly in the performing arts—takes place mainly at the local level. Municipalities, non-profit associations and local cultural organisations play a central role in promoting amateur artistic practices, often offering free or low-cost opportunities for participation.

Across Spain, various initiatives support the visibility and circulation of amateur performing arts. *These include the Federación de Teatro Amateur de la Comunidad Valenciana* [Federation

of Amateur Theatre of the Valencian Community], which brings together more than one hundred theatre groups and receives public support for activities and sector development, and *Red de Teatro Amateur de Madrid* (RED-TAM) [Madrid Amateur Theatre Network], which connects municipalities and amateur companies to facilitate programming and improve access. At the national level, the *Confederación EscenAmateur* [EscenAmateur Confederation] coordinates regional federations and represents the interests of the amateur theatre sector.

Table 4: People who have carried out artistic activities in Spain in the last 12 months by type of activity, in % of total population, period 2010-2025)

	2018-2019	2021-2022	2024-2025
Type of activity			
Writing	8.7	6.4	6.9
Painting or drawing	16.1	10.1	14.3
Other visual arts	10.3	5.2	6.0
Photography	28.8	13.1	19.6
Making videos	16.7	7.1	9.3
Designing webpages	3.2	1.4	2.4
Having a blog	2.5	0.6	1.1
Other audiovisual	3.1	1.3	2.4
Drama and theatre-making	2.2	1.3	1.3
Dance, ballet and flamenco	6.2	2.6	3.8
Playing a musical instrument	9.6	6.5	8.5
Sing in a choir	2.7	1.0	1.8
Other related to music	4.3	1.8	3.6
Other artistic activities	5.4	3.1	7.2

Source: Ministry of Culture (several years) *Survey of Cultural Habits and Practices in Spain*.

6.3 Trends & figures in household expenditure

Figures on cultural consumption are drawn from a specific exploitation of the *Household Budget Survey* carried out by the Ministry of Culture. Since 2024, the statistical framework has been adapted to the COICOP 2018 international classification system.

Table 5: Household cultural expenditure by expenditure purpose, 2024

Items (Field/Domain)	Million Euros	%	Per capita (Euros)
I. Books and Press	1986.8	13.9	41.0
Books	1581.3	11.0	32.6
<i>Educational and textbooks</i>	604.8	4.2	12.5
<i>Other books</i>	976.6	6.8	20.2
Press	405.5	2.8	8.4
<i>Newspapers</i>	295.2	2.1	6.1
<i>Magazines</i>	110.3	0.8	2.3
II. Cultural Services	4249.7	29.6	87.7
Cinema, theatre and others	2396.5	16.7	49.5
Museums, libraries, parks and similar	318	2.2	6.6
Subscription to audiovisual content, streaming services and rentals	949	6.6	19.6
Photographic services	109.3	0.8	2.3
Other cultural services	476.9	3.3	9.8
III. Audiovisual and information treatment support, equipment and accessories	4003.6	27.9	82.7
Image, sound and data support	184.1	1.3	3.8
Equipment for reception, recording and reproduction of sound and image	1562.9	10.9	32.3
<i>Equipment for reception, recording and reproduction of sound and image</i>	1047.5	7.3	21.6
<i>Smartwatches, ebooks and other information and communication devices</i>	453.1	3.2	9.4
<i>Other communication and information accessories</i>	62.3	0.4	1.3
Photographic and cinematographic equipment	72.4	0.5	1.5
<i>Cameras and other equipment</i>	62.6	0.4	1.3
<i>Accessories</i>	9.9	0.1	0.2
Videogames and consoles	566.6	4.0	11.7
Online games subscription and rental	101.2	0.7	2.1
Musical instruments	111.3	0.8	2.3
Information processing equipment	1371.8	9.6	28.3
Repair and rental of photographic, communication and broadcast equipment	33.2	0.2	0.7
IV. Mobile phone and internet services	4101.9	28.6	84.7
Mobile phone devices	2088.1	14.6	43.1
Broadband and internet related services	2013.7	14.0	41.6
TOTAL	14 341.9	100	296.1

Source: Specific exploitation of the Ministry of Culture (2025) from the *Household Budget Survey Base 2006* of the National Statistics Institute.

In 2024, household expenditure on cultural goods and services amounted to 14 341.9 million euros, representing 2.2% of total estimated household expenditure on goods and services.

Average household expenditure on culture stood at EUR 739.7, while average per capita expenditure reached EUR 296.1.

Among the main components of cultural expenditure were books (11%), periodicals (2.8%), performing arts and cinema (16.7%), audio-visual and sound equipment (10.9%), and mobile and Internet services (14%). In 2024, expenditure on video games and consoles was included as a separate category for the first time, accounting for 4% of total cultural expenditure.

Average per capita cultural expenditure was highest in municipalities with more than 100,000 inhabitants. Expenditure levels were also above the national average in the Autonomous Communities of Aragón, Castile and León, Catalonia, the Valencian Community, the Community of Madrid and La Rioja, with Catalonia recording the highest levels.

6.4 Culture and civil society

Civic centres, municipal cultural centres and *Casas de Cultura* [Houses of Culture] constitute key local infrastructures for cultural participation and community life in Spain. Managed predominantly by municipalities, these spaces organise a wide range of activities—including workshops, exhibitions, performances, educational programmes and neighbourhood initiatives—aimed at diverse and inclusive audiences. Beyond their strictly cultural functions, they play an important role in fostering social cohesion, facilitating intergenerational exchange and supporting community development at the local level.

According to the *Survey of Cultural Habits and Practices in Spain* conducted by the Ministry of Culture, visits to cultural centres declined from 19.9% of the population in 2014–2015 to 15% in 2024–2025, reflecting broader transformations in cultural participation patterns.

Alongside these infrastructures, community arts and participatory cultural projects have expanded significantly over the past decade. Many initiatives emphasise co-creation, mediation and inclusion, often involving collaboration between local authorities, cultural institutions and civil society organisations. Examples include Art i Part [Art and Part], promoted by the Barcelona City Council, as well as numerous local and regional programmes focused on community arts, cultural education and artistic mediation.

Civil society organisations continue to play a central role in Spain's cultural ecosystem through associations, neighbourhood groups, foundations and grassroots initiatives. Although there is no unified official register, the sector is extensive and highly decentralised, with a large number of organisations operating at local, regional and national levels and contributing to cultural production, participation and community engagement.

Recent policy debates increasingly link cultural participation with cultural rights, democratic engagement and community development. In this context, the *Cultural Rights Plan 2025–2030* emphasises the strengthening of local cultural ecosystems, participatory governance and community-based initiatives. It promotes cooperation between public institutions and civil society while recognising citizens not only as audiences but also as active cultural agents involved in cultural creation and community life.

7. Financing and support

7.1 Public funding

7.1.1 Indicators

The majority of public cultural expenditure in Spain is carried out by regional and local authorities, which together account for approximately 83% of total public cultural spending (see Table 6). This distribution reflects the highly decentralised nature of the Spanish cultural policy system, in which Autonomous Communities and municipalities are primarily responsible for financing and implementing cultural policies, while the central government plays a more limited and coordinating role.

Between 2018 and 2023, public expenditure on culture—both in total terms and per capita—has increased across all levels of government, indicating a positive recovery trend following the impact of the COVID-19 crisis. This growth has been supported not only by domestic public budgets but also by European funding instruments, particularly the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF).

The RRF has contributed significantly to cultural investment within the framework of Spain's Recovery Plan, supporting projects aligned with four strategic priorities: ecological transition, digital transformation, social and territorial cohesion, and gender equality. Between 2021 and 2026, Spain has been allocated substantial EU funding—amounting to approximately 163 billion euro, including loans—which has reinforced public investment capacity across sectors, including culture.

In 2023, cultural expenditure by the General State Administration amounted to 1 285.9 million euro, compared to 1 750.9 million euro by the Autonomous Communities and 4 779.1 million euro by local governments. As a share of GDP, these figures represented 0.09%, 0.12%, and 0.32%, respectively.

Total public cultural expenditure per capita reached 162.5 euro in 2023. By level of government, per capita expenditure amounted to 26.7 euro for the central government, 36.4 euro for the Autonomous Communities, and 99.4 euro for local governments.

Per capita expenditure varied considerably across regions. Based on liquidated regional cultural expenditure for 2023, the highest levels were recorded in Navarre (89.6 euro), the Basque Country (80.9 euro), La Rioja (60.1 euro) and Catalonia (57.0 euro). At the lower end were Castilla-La Mancha (18.8 euro), Madrid (20.1 euro), Murcia (20.5 euro), Aragon (21.3 euro) and the Canary Islands (22.7 euro).

Overall, public cultural expenditure increased by 46.1% in nominal terms between 2018 and 2023. Growth was strongest at the central government level (+84.7%), followed by the Autonomous Communities (+48.6%) and local governments (+37.5%).

Public expenditure on culture accounted for approximately 0.53% of Spain's GDP in 2023, up

from 0.46% in 2018. Data on cultural expenditure as a share of total public expenditure—available only by level of government—show that culture represented 0.35% of total expenditure by the General State Administration, 0.65% by the Autonomous Communities, and 5.16% by local governments in 2023. All levels of government recorded increases over the period 2018–2023. The largest increase was observed at the local level (+0.31 percentage points), followed by the Autonomous Communities and the central government (both +0.08 percentage points).

7.1.2 Expenditure on government level

The data in Table 6 show a high degree of decentralisation in public cultural expenditure. Traditionally, territorial governments (regional and local) account for approximately 85% of total public spending in the sector. In 2023, regional and local authorities spent a combined total of 6,529.8 million euro, of which 22% corresponded to regional governments and 61% to local authorities.

At the regional level, the Autonomous Communities accounting for the largest shares of cultural expenditure were Catalonia (25.7%), Andalusia (12.5%), the Valencian Community (10.5%), the Basque Country (10.2%), and Madrid (7.9%).

Table 6: Public cultural expenditure by level of government, 2018 and 2023

Level of government	2018			2023		
	Total	%	Per capita	Total	%	Per capita
State (central, federal)	696 348	13	14.9	1 285 944	16	26.7
Regional (provincial, Länder, etc.)	1 178 386	22	25.3	1 750 861	22	36.4
Local (municipal, incl. counties)	3 475 796	65	74.5	4 779 145	61	99.4
TOTAL	5 350 530	100%	114.7	7 815 950	100%	162.5

Source: Ministry of Culture (several years) *Cultural Statistics Yearbook* and Population Census.

7.1.3 Expenditure per sector

In 2023, the central government spent 1 285.9 million euro on culture, of which 43.4% corresponded to current and capital transfers to other levels of government and private actors.

By sector, approximately 35% of central government cultural expenditure was allocated to the cultural heritage sector, reflecting its primary responsibility for major museums and national monuments. The second largest category was interdisciplinary cultural practices (33.9%), including 14% devoted to cultural promotion and cooperation and 11% to cultural dissemination abroad, both particularly relevant in a highly decentralised country with strong international cultural engagement, especially with Latin America. The third largest area of expenditure was performing arts and music (15.1%), with a clear predominance of music and dance, reflecting the central government’s responsibility for national orchestras

and lyric institutions. Finally, cinematographic production (11.7%) represents a substantial component of the broader audiovisual and multimedia sector (14.4%).

Table 6.1: Direct state cultural expenditure and transfers: by sector, 2023 in 1000 of national currency

Field/ Domain/ Subdomain	TOTAL		Of which direct expenditure	of which transfers
	in 1000 euros	in %		
I. Cultural Heritage	451 006	35.1	398 847	52 159
Artistic and historical heritage	368 231	28.6	325 421	4 281
Monuments	137 118	10.7	125 795	11 323
Museums	210 097	16.3	180 996	29 101
Archives	2 868	2.2	2 833	350
Libraries	41 020	3.2	40 285	735
Others	13 075	1.0	4 811	8 264
II. Visual Arts	1 296	0.1	838	458
Exhibitions	1 296	0.1	838	458
III. Performing Arts and Music	193 985	15.1	114 298	79 687
Music and dance	117 878	9.2	69 494	48 384
IV. Books and Press	17 654	1.4	6 716	10 938
Books	17 654	1.4	6 716	10 938
V. Audiovisual and Multimedia	184 996	14.4	17 345	167 651
Cinema	150 137	11.7	11 362	138 775
VI. Interdisciplinary	436 222	33.9	188 827	247 395
Cultural promotion and cooperation	179 754	14.0	8 752	171 002
Cultural dissemination abroad	141 727	11.0	132 910	8 817
General administration and services	41 553	3.2	41 474	79
VII. Not covered by domain I-VI	786	0.1	786	0
TOTAL	1 285 944	100	727 657	558 287

Source: Ministry of Culture (2025) *Cultural Statistics Yearbook 2025*

* The Domain / Sub-domain are those included in the *Cultural Statistics Yearbook 2025*.

** Current and capital transfers.

In 2023, the Autonomous Communities spent 1 750.9 million euro on culture, of which approximately 51.7% corresponded to current and capital transfers to other levels of government and private actors. In comparative terms, the share of transfers is higher than that of the central government (43.4%), highlighting the role of regional governments as key intermediaries in the cultural funding system.

The main areas of expenditure for the Autonomous Communities are interdisciplinary cultural activities (43.4%) and cultural heritage (35.6%), which together account for nearly 79% of regional cultural spending. Expenditure on heritage reflects its strong symbolic value and its importance as a public asset, particularly in relation to cultural tourism. In the case of interdisciplinary spending, significant resources are allocated to cultural promotion, dissemination and cooperation, as well as to language policy, a key competence at the regional level. Among the remaining sectors, performing arts and music (14.6%) represent a

significant share, reflecting their importance within regional cultural policies. There are, however, substantial differences across Autonomous Communities in terms of priorities and spending levels.

Table 6.2: Direct state regional cultural expenditure and transfers: by fields, 2023 in 1000 of national currency

Field/ Domain/ Subdomain	TOTAL		Of which direct expenditure	of which transfers
	in 1000 euros	in %		
I. Cultural Heritage	623 183	35.6	394 435	228 748
Artistic and historical heritage	470 942	26.9	261 111	209 831
Monuments	194 066	11.1	128 087	65 979
Museums	165 467	9.5	89 496	75 971
Archaeological sites	22 019	1.3	16 517	5 502
Others	89 389	5.1	27 011	62 378
Archives	32 183	1.8	28 678	3 505
Libraries	120 059	6.9	104 646	15 413
II. Visual Arts	26 692	1.5	7 582	19 110
Exhibitions	17 335	1.0	6 025	11 310
Photography	1 187	0.1	1 002	185
Other Plastic Arts	8 171	0.5	555	7 616
III. Performing Arts and Music	255 404	14.6	77 781	177 623
Music	159 911	9.1	44 928	114 983
Dance	12 773	0.7	2 931	9 842
Theatre and Musical Theatre	63 760	3.6	18 233	45 527
Others	18 961	1.1	11 690	7 271
IV. Books and Press	15 937	0.9	4 958	10 979
Book	15 937	0.9	4 958	10 979
V. Audiovisual and Multimedia	67 328	3.8	2 617	64 711
Cinema	51 697	3.0	2 286	49 411
Video	349	0	60	289
Recorded music	0	0	0	0
Others	15 282	0.9	270	15012
VI. Interdisciplinary	759 759	43.4	355 386	404 373
Cultural promotion and cooperation	279 078	15.9	54 162	224 916
Cultural dissemination abroad	23 326	1.3	3 474	19 852
General administration and services	258 087	14.7	244 062	14 025
Language policy	186 033	10.6	48 452	137 581
Others	13 234	0.8	5 236	7 998
VII. Not covered by domain I-VI	2 558	0.1	2 095	463
TOTAL	1 750 861	100	844 856	906 005

Source: Ministry of Culture (2025)

* The Domain / Sub-domain are those included in the *Cultural Statistics Yearbook 2025*.

** Current and capital transfers.

At the local level, 54.1% of cultural expenditure is allocated to cultural heritage, including 24.3% devoted to popular celebrations and 13.3% to cultural infrastructure. Interdisciplinary expenditure accounts for the remaining 45.9% in 2023, including 30.1% allocated to cultural promotion.

Table 6.3: Direct state local cultural expenditure and transfers: by fields, 2023 in 1000 of national currency

Field/ Domain/ Subdomain	TOTAL		of which direct expenditure	of which transfers
	in 1000 euros	in %		
I. Cultural Heritage	2 586 758	54.1	2 228 493	358 265
Protection and management of historical and artistic heritage	299 365	6.3	240 667	58 698
Archives	51 571	1.1	48 770	2 801
Public libraries	439 817	9.2	404 058	35 759
Cultural infrastructure	633 420	13.3	450 002	183 418
Popular celebrations	1 162 585	24.3	1 084 998	77 587
VI. Interdisciplinary	2 192 387	45.9	1 550 654	641 733
Cultural promotion	1 439 660	30.1	970 825	468 835
General administration of culture	752 727	15.8	579 828	172 899
TOTAL	4 779 145	100	3 779 147	999 998

Source: Ministry of Culture (2025)

* The Domain / Sub-domain are those included in the *Cultural Statistics Yearbook 2025*.

** Current and capital transfers.

7.2 Support programmes

7.2.1 Strategies, programmes and other forms of support

The visual arts have traditionally been one of the main recipients of public support for creativity in Spain. Public resources are allocated to exhibitions, artistic production and the acquisition of artworks through state, regional and local museums and cultural institutions. Regional and local authorities also organise competitions, awards and grant schemes supporting both emerging and established artists. At the international level, the Ministry of Culture, in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation, promotes the international presence of Spanish artists through participation in biennials, exhibitions, residency programmes and other cultural events abroad.

In the audiovisual sector, support is primarily channelled through the Institute of Cinematography and Audiovisual Arts (ICAA), which administers grants for film production, distribution, exhibition and international promotion. Recent policies have sought to strengthen the competitiveness of the Spanish audiovisual sector, support independent

production and encourage international co-productions, in line with broader strategies for the development of cultural and creative industries.

The performing arts and music sector benefits from a wide range of support measures managed by the National Institute for the Performing Arts and Music (INAEM). These include grants for creation, production, touring and dissemination across theatre, dance, music and circus. INAEM also supports artistic mobility, residencies and professional development initiatives.

One of the most significant programmes is *Platea*, implemented jointly with the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces, which facilitates the circulation of performing arts productions through municipal venues across the country. More broadly, support for the sector, traditionally centred on theatre, has progressively expanded to include dance, circus and popular music through a combination of funding schemes and sectoral initiatives, including touring circuits supported by networks such as the *Red de Teatros Alternativos* [Network of Alternative Theatres].

In the field of live music, programmes such as *Girando Por Salas (GPS)* [project GPS - Turn by Halls], organised by the INAEM in collaboration with sector organisations, aim to support emerging artists by facilitating concert tours outside their Autonomous Community, thereby contributing to their professionalisation and to the strengthening of live music circuits.

At the regional and local levels, support for creators is provided through grant schemes, artist residencies, touring networks, cultural facilities and cultural industry development programmes. In some Autonomous Communities, support for artistic creation is also linked to the promotion of regional languages and cultural identities.

Professional development constitutes another important area of support. Public institutions offer specialised training programmes for artists, cultural managers and creative professionals. Examples include the *Escuela Pública de Formación Cultural de Andalucía* [Andalusian Public School of Cultural Training], which provides training in artistic and cultural professions, and the *Servei de Desenvolupament Empresarial* [Business Development Service] of Catalonia, which supports the professionalisation and business development of cultural and creative enterprises.

7.2.2 Artist's funds

Spain has relatively few funding mechanisms aimed directly at individual artists. Most public support is channelled through sectoral grant schemes administered by specialised cultural institutions, including the Institute of Cinematography and Audiovisual Arts (ICAA), the National Institute for the Performing Arts and Music (INAEM), and regional and local cultural authorities.

One of the most important public funding instruments is the Fondo de Protección a la Cinematografía y al Fondo de fomento de la cinematografía [Film Protection Fund / Film Promotion Fund], managed by the ICAA within the framework established by the Cinema

Law (*Law 55/2007*) and its subsequent reforms. The Fund supports film and audiovisual production, distribution, exhibition and internationalisation through a system of grants benefiting both companies and individual creators.

In addition to direct public funding, artists benefit from a range of copyright-based remuneration mechanisms. These include compensation for private copying (private copying levy), regulated under the *Intellectual Property Act* and aligned with European Union provisions, and financed primarily by manufacturers and distributors of recording and reproduction devices and media. Revenues are distributed to rights holders through collective management organisations.

Authors and publishers also receive remuneration for the public lending of protected works through libraries and certain cultural institutions, in accordance with the *Intellectual Property Act* and European Union legislation. Public lending rights are managed through collective management organisations, although exemptions apply to some categories of libraries, particularly smaller municipal and educational libraries.

At the regional and local levels, additional mechanisms complement national funding schemes, often with a stronger focus on artistic creation, emerging professionals, mobility and project-based support. Autonomous Communities and municipalities provide grants, residencies, artistic commissions and internationalisation programmes, contributing to a diversified and territorially distributed support system.

Examples include the grant programmes managed by the Catalan Institute for Cultural Enterprises (ICEC), which support creation, research, development and mobility across different cultural sectors, and the initiatives of the Basque Institute Etxepare, which promote the international presence and mobility of Basque artists and cultural professionals. Similar support schemes exist in other Autonomous Communities, including Andalusia, the Valencian Community and Galicia, where public calls regularly provide funding for artistic creation, production, research and dissemination. Together, these mechanisms play an important role in supporting artistic careers and strengthening regional cultural ecosystems.

7.2.3 Grants, awards, scholarships

Awards, grants and scholarships remain among the most common instruments used to support artists and creators in Spain. At the national level, the Ministry of Culture manages a wide range of funding schemes, awards and mobility programmes covering literature, visual arts, performing arts, music, cinema, cultural heritage and cultural industries.

Among the most prestigious distinctions are the *Premios Nacionales* [National Awards], which recognise outstanding achievements in fields such as literature, visual arts, photography, illustration, comics, music, performing arts, cinema, cultural industries and cultural heritage. Other major distinctions include the Gold Medals for Merit in Fine Arts, awarded in recognition of exceptional contributions to culture, the Miguel de Cervantes Prize, the highest distinction in Spanish-language literature, and the Velázquez Prize for the Visual Arts,

which recognises outstanding contributions to contemporary artistic creation in the Ibero-American sphere.

Alongside awards, public authorities provide grants for artistic creation, research, mobility, internationalisation and professional development. These programmes are administered by the Ministry of Culture and its specialised agencies, including the Institute of Cinematography and Audiovisual Arts (ICAA) and the National Institute for the Performing Arts and Music (INAEM). Increasing attention is also given to artist residencies, international exchanges and support for emerging creators.

In addition to public programmes, numerous foundations, cultural institutions and professional organisations offer scholarships, awards and residency opportunities. Notable examples include the Premis Lluís Carulla, awarded by the Fundació Carulla to support innovative cultural and artistic projects, as well as prizes and initiatives promoted by organisations such as La Fábrica—particularly in photography and visual arts—and specialised cultural platforms (*Masdearte*, *Arteinformado* or *El Cultural*), contributing to a diverse ecosystem of support for artistic creation and cultural professionals.

7.2.4 Support to professional artists' associations or unions

Spain does not have a system of permanent institutional funding for artists' associations or trade unions. However, professional organisations can access public support through competitive grant programmes at both national and regional levels.

At the national level, the Ministry of Culture provides funding for cultural action, promotion and professionalisation projects carried out by non-profit cultural organisations. These programmes aim to strengthen the cultural sector, improve professional capacities, encourage networking and foster participation in cultural policymaking. In recent years, greater attention has been paid to reinforcing the role of professional associations and trade unions as representative bodies within the cultural sector. In 2025, the Ministry launched a specific programme to support non-profit cultural organisations and trade unions operating at the state level, with the objective of strengthening their representativeness and their contribution to cultural policy development.

Sector-specific support is also available. The National Institute for the Performing Arts and Music (INAEM) provides grants to associations, federations and confederations active in theatre, dance, music and circus arts, supporting professional events, sectoral cooperation, dissemination activities, and projects with national or international reach. Representative organisations in the sector include entities such as the *Federación Estatal de Asociaciones de Empresas de Teatro y Danza* [State Federation of Associations of Theatre and Dance Companies], the *Red Española de Teatros, Auditorios, Circuitos y Festivales de Titularidad Pública* [Spanish Network of Theatres, Auditoriums, Circuits and Festivals of Public Ownership], and networks of independent venues and promoters.

Collective management organisations also play a complementary role in supporting

professional communities. Organisations such as SGAE, AIE, VEGAP and DAMA operate grant schemes, training programmes, welfare funds and professional development initiatives for creators and rights holders, thereby contributing to the sustainability of artistic careers and strengthening professional representation within the cultural sector.

7.3 Private funding

Aside from household expenditure on cultural goods and services, comprehensive and up-to-date data on private-sector investment in culture in Spain remain limited. Nevertheless, private funding continues to play a complementary role alongside public support through sponsorship, philanthropy, foundations and emerging forms of collective financing.

Historically, one of the most distinctive features of private cultural funding in Spain was the role of the *cajas de ahorro* (savings banks), which, through their *obra social* programmes, made substantial contributions to cultural activities, heritage conservation and local cultural infrastructure. The restructuring of the financial sector following the 2008 economic crisis, and the reforms implemented from 2010 onwards, led to a significant decline in this model. While many savings banks disappeared or were integrated into commercial banking groups, part of their social and cultural activities continued through foundations, albeit at a reduced scale⁶.

The legal framework for cultural patronage has evolved gradually. Tax incentives for donations and sponsorship were strengthened by reforms to *Law 49/2002 on the tax regime of non-profit entities and incentives for patronage*, most recently through *Law 13/2023*, which increased deductions for individual and corporate donations. These reforms sought to encourage private support for cultural, social and scientific activities. Despite these advances, cultural stakeholders continue to advocate for a more comprehensive framework for cultural patronage and philanthropy.

In parallel, new forms of private and community-based support have gained visibility. Crowdfunding platforms such as *Verkami* have become established instruments for financing artistic and cultural projects, particularly among independent creators. Other initiatives, such as the heritage-focused platform *Todos a Una* promoted by *Hispania Nostra*, illustrate the growing use of collective financing to support cultural and natural heritage projects. Together, these developments reflect a gradual diversification of cultural funding mechanisms and a growing role for participatory forms of cultural financing.

Recent policy debates, including those reflected in the *Cultural Rights Plan 2025–2030*, have emphasised the importance of diversifying sources of cultural funding and strengthening cooperation between public institutions, civil society organisations, philanthropic foundations and private actors.

⁶ For more details, see: Villarroya, A. (2017). El valor de la obra cultural y patrimonial de las Cajas de Ahorro. *Periférica Internacional. Revista Para El análisis De La Cultura Y El Territorio*, (17), 83–91. <https://doi.org/10.25267/Periferica.2016.i17.07>