



Short Profile August 2025

Albania

Short Cultural Policy Profile¹

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¹ See [Detailed Compendium Country Profiles in 2011 & 2022](#)

1. Fact and figures

- Political system: Unitary Parliamentary Constitutional Republic
- Official language(s): Albanian (Shqip)
- Dialects of Official language: North- Gheg and South- Tosk
- Minority language(s): Greek, Aromanian, Romani, Serbo Croatian, Bulgarian, Bosnian, North Macedonian, Turkish
- Other languages: English, Italian, French, German

Note: ⁽¹⁾ format for Sources, while ¹ for in reference to footnotes

	<i>Latest available data</i>	<i>Latest available data minus 5 years</i>
<i>Population on January 1st</i>	2025: 2 363 314 ²	2020: 2 845 955 ⁽¹⁾ 2021: 2 829 741 ⁽¹⁾ 2022: 2 793 592 ⁽¹⁾ 2023: 2 761 785 ⁽¹⁾
<i>GDP in million EUR</i>	Q1 2024: 5 428.8 (p) ⁽²⁾ Q2 2024: 6 513.1 (p) ⁽²⁾ Q3 2024: 6 462.9 (p) ⁽²⁾	2020: 4 622 ³ Q3 2022: 4 680.7 ⁽²⁾ Q4 2022: 4 896.7 ⁽²⁾ Q1 2023: 4 489.3 (p) ⁽²⁾ Q2 2023: 5 549.8 (p) ⁽²⁾ Q3 2023: 5 753.3 (p) ⁽²⁾ Q4 2023: 6 084.2 (p) ⁽²⁾
<i>GDP per capita in PPS Index (EU27_2020 = 100)</i>	2024: 37(e) ⁽³⁾	2020: 30 ⁽³⁾ 2021: 31 ⁽³⁾ 2022: 34 ⁽³⁾ 2023: 36 (p) ⁽³⁾

² INSTAT. Albania population Jan1, 2025: <https://www.instat.gov.al/en/themes/demography-and-social-indicators/population/publication/2025/population-of-albania-on-1st-january-2025/>

³ European Commission, Directorate General Trade and Economic Security Country Overview: https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/isdb_results/factsheets/country/overview_albania_en.pdf

<i>General government expenditure (in % of GDP)</i>	0.76% ⁴	
<i>Public cultural expenditure</i>	2024: (Entertainment, Culture and Religious Affairs) = 1.56 % of total public expenditures. ⁵	2023: 1.75% ⁴ 2022: 1.64% ⁴ 2021: 1.27% ⁴ 2020: 1.28% ⁴ 2019: 1.50% ⁴
<i>Public cultural expenditure as % of GDP</i>	2024: (Entertainment, Culture and Religious Affairs) = 0.45 % of total GDP ⁴	2023: .51% ⁴ 2022: 0.50% ⁴ 2021: 0.41% ⁴ 2020: 0.42% ⁴ 2019: 0.43% ⁴
<i>Public cultural expenditure per Capita</i>	n.a.	n.a.
<i>Share of cultural employment of total employment</i>	2021: 1.7% ⁶	2020: 1.5% ⁵ 2019: 1.6% ⁵

Sources:

(1).Population on January 1st, latest data available / <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tps00001/default/table?lang=en>

(2).GDP in million EUR, latest data available / https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/namq_10_gdp/default/table?lang=en

(3).GDP per capita in PPS Index (EU27_2020 = 100), latest data available / <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tec00114/default/table?lang=en>

No Data Available for Albania in the below sources

(4).General government expenditure (in % of GDP), latest data available / <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tec00023/default/table?lang=en>

(5).Public cultural expenditure / Public cultural expenditure as % of GDP / Public cultural expenditure per Capita: see also chapter 7.1.1 of the national Compendium profile

⁴ Follow the Money, Ndiq Parate, <https://ndiqparate.al/?p=22807>

⁵ INSTAT, Culture Statistics 2024, Ministry of Finance, Public expenditures in culture, p.10 <https://www.instat.gov.al/media/15474/culture-statistics-2024.pdf>

⁶ INSTAT, Culture Statistics 2021, Cultural Employment, p.5, <https://www.instat.gov.al/media/10161/culture-statistics-2021.pdf>

Share of cultural employment of total employment / latest data available:
https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/cult_emp_sex/default/table?lang=en

2. Cultural policy system

2.1 Objectives

The main cultural policy in Albania is defined by the *National Strategy for Culture 2019-2025*⁷ by the Ministry of Culture. In 2024, as proposed by the Prime Minister Edi Rama, the Ministry of Culture was restructured for an integrated approach among sectors and emphasis on digital development, changed its name to the Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation and its state responsibility was decided as outlined by the Council of Ministers (VKM Nr. 30) on 17 January 2024⁸.

Based on the National Strategy for Culture 2019-2025⁹, the mission of this document is in creating a favourable environment for the growth and development of cultural and creative services and products in the public and private sector, and its Strategic Goal is an Increased emphasis on art and culture.

Policy Goals and Specific Objectives of the National Strategy for Culture 2019- 2025 are:

1. Improving and expanding cultural markets through legislation, beneficiaries of which will be the creators, artistic and cultural creativity, and cultural heritage - Creating a sustainable legal and institutional environment for the development of art and culture.
2. Preservation and protection of tangible and intangible cultural heritage. - Rehabilitation of architectural heritage, museums and landscape by increasing the number of rehabilitated monuments and museums.

⁷ National Strategy of Culture 2019-2025, Albanian Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation <https://meki.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/finale-Strategjia-Kombe%CC%88tare-pe%CC%88r-Kulture%CC%88n-2019-2025-ne-Anglisht.pdf>

⁸ National Bulletin of the Republic of Albania, Fletorja Zyrtare e Republikës së Shqipërisë Nr. 14, Date. 22/01/2024, pp.2226 <https://qbz.gov.al/eli/fz/2024/14/f490f1f3-ff71-4ce1-9fd2-335db94e4d16;q=Ministria%20e%20Ekonomis%C3%AB,%20Kultur%C3%ABs%20dhe%20Inovacionit>

⁹ National Strategy of Culture 2019-2025, Albanian Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation, pp.2 <https://meki.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/finale-Strategjia-Kombe%CC%88tare-pe%CC%88r-Kulture%CC%88n-2019-2025-ne-Anglisht.pdf>

3. Promoting and representing the cultural values of the Albanian arts and heritage (tangible and intangible) in important international activities and presenting good practices. - Promoting the values of art, cultural heritage and museum funds.
4. Supporting the creativity of Albanian artists and increasing cultural and artistic activities. - Increasing public interest in cultural programs by improving infrastructure services, as well as increasing artistic quality.
5. Design and implementation of an educational platform through arts and cultural heritage institutions and the pre-university system. Audience development.

The main activities outline in the Official Bulletin of the Republic of Albania¹⁰ for the Ministry of Economy, Culture and innovation, specifically for the Culture sector 3/2, on 17 January 2024, are:

- a) drafts and coordinates work on policies in the field of art and culture through educating the population, revitalizing cultural values and heritage, encouraging public and private investments in these sectors, monitoring the use of public funds in support of cultural development, education in culture, protection of cultural heritage, preservation and continuity of the tradition of religious harmony in Albanian culture, as well as regional cooperation;
- b) drafts protective and promotional policies for cultural heritage, material or spiritual, as well as the creation of the necessary legal and supportive spaces for the preservation and cultivation of written culture, for artistic creativity in general, as well as to promote the achievements of Albanian culture and to increase the competitiveness of Albanian cultural products across borders;
- c) drafts policies for the existence of Albania, as an active partner in international, European and regional organizations, in the field of art and culture and cultural heritage, through accession to institutions relevant;
- ç) leads, programs and supports national and international activities, with the aim of identifying and developing cultural, artistic and literary trends within the country, as well as including the confrontation of the best national values with regional ones, both inherited and contemporary ones, and creating a space for pan-Albanian dialogue and cultural diversity;

¹⁰ The official bulleting of the Republic of Albania, Fletorja Zyrtare e Republikës së Shqipërisë, Nr. 14, Date. 22/01/2024, pp.2227, <https://qbz.gov.al/eli/fz/2024/14/f490f1f3-ff71-4ce1-9fd2-335db94e4d16;q=Ministria%20e%20Ekonomis%C3%AB,%20Kultur%C3%ABs%20dhe%20Inovacionit>

d) carries out the registration, supervision and monitors the respect of copyright and other rights related to them by subjects, natural/legal persons, private or public, users of literary, artistic and scientific property;

e) develops policies to encourage investments in cultural assets, provides financial support through the National Fund for the Care of Cultural Heritage, art and craft centers in schools, as well as ongoing training for licensees in material cultural assets.

Also, as part of the National Strategy, the other two strategic documents as outlined by the Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation are:

- 1) The *Integrity Plan for the Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation 2024-2027*¹¹, includes an analysis of the evaluation of the risks of the integrity in the institution, and it forecasts concrete measurements for the implementation, in order to improve, efficiency, transparency, accountability, increase of public trust, and also the achievement of the strategic and specific objectives of the institution.
- 2) The *National Employment and Skills Strategy 2023-2030*, Quality Jobs and Life-Long Skills for All¹², including: Policy Goal 1: Skills Development and Better Labour Market Matching of Supply and Demand, and Policy Goal 2: Inclusive Employment Opportunities The second policy goal emphasizes the promotion of decent employment for all through inclusive labour market policies.

Alignment with European and UNESCO objectives remain priorities, however modernization, digitalization and innovation have taken a greater focus. Cultural heritage, creative industries and regional cooperation are currently seen as more sustainable drivers of economic growth.

2.2 Main features

¹¹ The Integrity Plan for the Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation 2024-2027, Plani i Integritetit të MINISTRISË SË EKONOMISË, KULTURËS DHE INOVACIONIT, July 2024, <https://meki.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Plani-i-Integritetit-MEKI.pdf>

¹² National Employment and Skills Strategy 2023-2030 Progress Report 2023 Quality Jobs and Life-Long Skills for all, meki.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/FINAL-Draft_NESS_Annual-Progress-Report_2023_30.10.2024.pdf

The National Strategy for Culture 2019-2025 aims to foster the growth of cultural and creative sectors in Albania, with a strategic focus on increasing the importance of art and culture. Its main goals include expanding cultural markets, preserving cultural heritage, promoting Albanian arts internationally, supporting artists and cultural activities, and developing educational platforms to grow audiences.

According to the Prime Minister Edi Rama¹³, the restructuring of the Ministry of Culture to the new Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation in January 2024, is important as the country needs an integrated approach to Economy, Culture, and Innovation, as digital technology connects all areas of life. Culture should no longer be separate, but work closely with other sectors to maximize its impact and benefits.

The main national actors in the cultural policy system are the central government, such as the Prime Minister's office, and also the Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation.

The civil society does play a role in proposing, collaborating and, or monitoring cultural policies by the state institutions, and also at municipal level.

At municipal level, the Tirana Municipality drafted the Strategy of Culture for Tirana 2019-2024.

In 2018-2019, the UNESCO IFCD funded project to the civil society, recommended to the Ministry of Culture and Tirana Municipality a PUBLIC ART POLICY AND ACTION PLAN (2019-2024)¹⁴.

Although the monitoring of the National Policy for Culture has been conducted by the Prime Ministry's office of Albania, the civil society has also monitored it through articles and reports, demanding an increase in funding, such as claiming pittance to culture with less than 1% funding, and demanding a 2% state budget for culture¹⁵.

¹³ PM explains why merged Economy with Culture in One Ministry, January 10, 2024 Albanian Daily News, <https://albaniandailynews.com/news/pm-explains-why-merged-economy-with-culture-in-one-ministry>

¹⁴ PUBLIC ART POLICY AND ACTION PLAN (2019-2024) for TIRANA Recommendations for Civil-Public-Private Partnership (PCPP) Ekphrasis Studio NPO, June 24, 2019 https://www.academia.edu/39697445/PUBLIC_ART_POLICY_AND_ACTION_PLAN_2019_2024_for_TIRANA

¹⁵ Monitoring Report on the Practices of Expenditures at the Ministry of Culture, 2022 Budget, RAPORT MONITORIMI MBI PRAKTIKAT E SHPENZIMEVE NË MINISTRINË E KULTURËS BUXHETI 2022, Ilda Kurti, The

The main budgets for culture are delivered by the Albanian Ministry of Finance to the Albanian Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation, while municipalities have more of an independent financial generation of funds. State and municipal institutions regularly have calls for projects, and support the civil and private sector. However, cultural funding has diversified in the last decade not only for the civil society but also for the Ministries and Municipalities with other European funds, such as Creative Europe, Culture Moves Europe, IPA Interreg, and many other funds not only by European but also international organisations such as UNESCO, UNDP, etc.

The National Culture Strategy 2019–2025, shows that responsibilities for cultural affairs in Albania are being re-centralised and the policy approach is more interventionist, though there are also entrepreneurial elements encouraged within a centrally coordinated framework. The Ministry of Culture retained a leading role, with new agencies further centralizing authority, while the strategy supports market expansion and creative industry growth, but always under strong government direction.

However it also reflects a more entrepreneurial and developmental approach to cultural policy. Its objectives include improving and expanding cultural markets, strengthening the creative industries, and leveraging technology to create new opportunities for cultural and creative sectors. There is a clear emphasis on fostering public-private partnerships, supporting creative entrepreneurship, and integrating culture into broader economic and social development strategies.

In 2024, the new Ministry of Economy, Culture, and Innovation was established to restructure the Ministry of Culture. According to the social media post by the Minister Blendi Gonxhe, a total of 275 employees were reallocated to the new entity, with 91 employees from the former culture ministry being relieved of their duties¹⁶. Modernization is a key priority including integrating technology into cultural heritage management, and creating a digital database for cultural assets and promoting heritage through technology. This ministry oversees the right to education and professional

Citizens Stand, February 2022 <https://qeverisja.qq.com.al/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/QENDRESA-QYTETARE.-Raporti-per-kulturen.-Janar-2022.-Ilda-Kurti.-11.pdf>

¹⁶ Blendi Gonxhja clarifies: There are no staff cuts, we have increased employees and salaries, Newsbomb.al, 14 February, 2024, <https://newsbomb.al/blendi-gonxhja-e-sqaron-ska-shkurtim-stafi-kemi-shtuar-punonjesit-dhe-pagat>

training, safe and decent employment; designs and implements government policies in the field of development and promotion of culture, cultural, material and spiritual heritage, increasing cultural dialogue, cultural integration in the European and the world, in accordance with the program of the government of the Republic of Albania.

According to PM Rama, the Ministry was created to deal faster with the country's needs with an integrated approach and remove the secularized, corrupt government structure, which impeded innovation. According to PM Rama: *"...when culture can no longer remain a small island separated from the new economic and social dynamics of the country, on which it has a great influencing potential...I have decided to change the structure of the government and create a new Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation."*¹⁷

According to Afrim Krasniqi, the executive director of the Tirana-based Institute for Political Studies, a think tank, he states: *"Rama makes changes, mainly through social media, without analysis, without an accompanying document, without argumentation, without informing public opinion – and without showing how this is consistent with the government's program, the country's priorities and the needs of Albania in the integration process"*.¹⁸

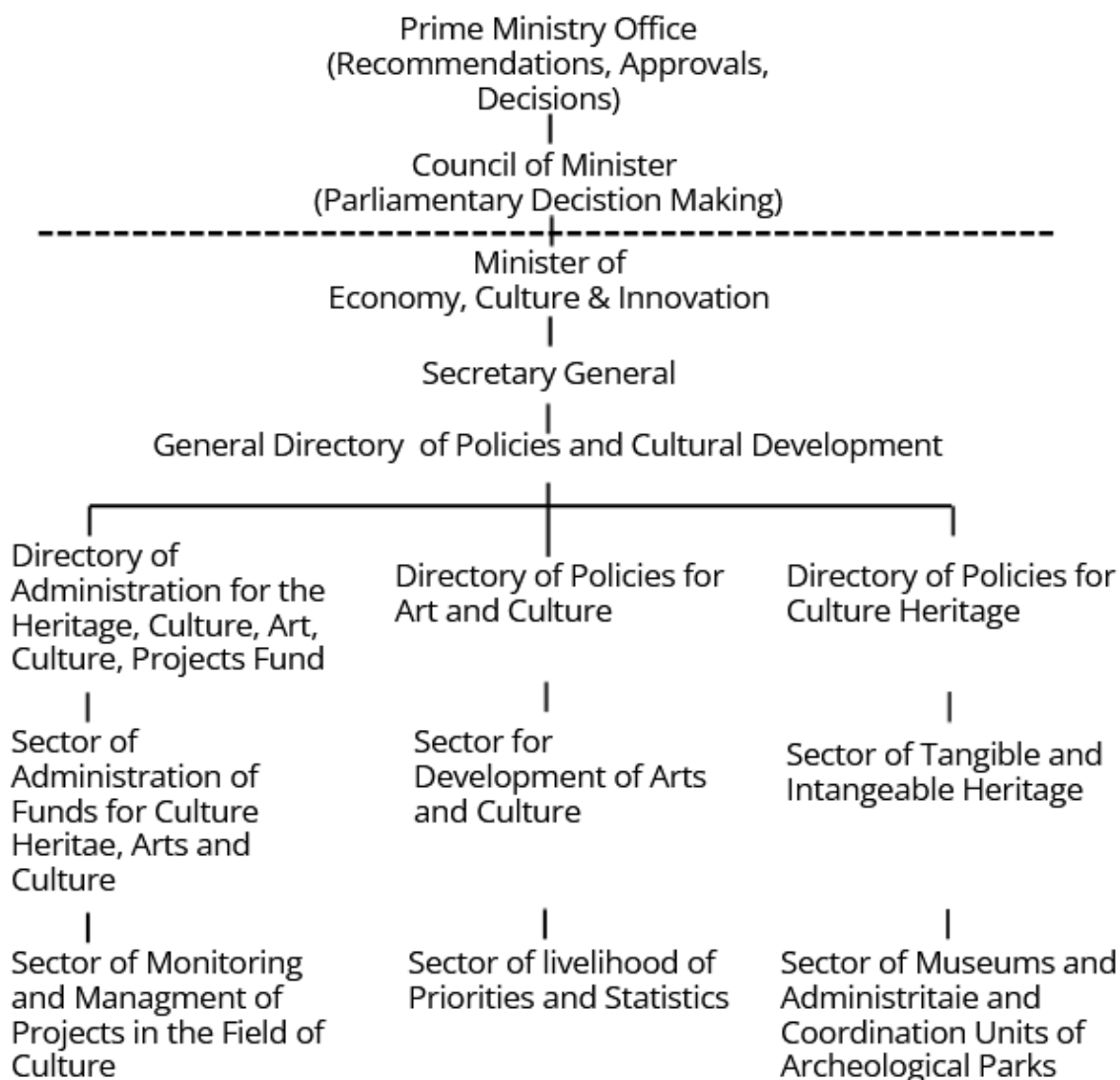
Therefore, the cultural policy system has been re-centralised, but also de-centralised with municipalities playing a larger role in culture, and international and European funds creating a more active civil society. The state remains the main interventionist aiming to foster a more entrepreneurial and digital approach to culture.

¹⁷ Rama creates Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation, Hashtag.al, 8 January 2024

<https://www.hashtag.al/en/index.php/2024/01/08/rama-krijon-ministri-te-re-blendi-gonxhe-caktohet-ministri-i-ekonomise-kultures-dhe-inovacionit/>

¹⁸ Albania's latest cabinet changes are window dressing, analyst says, Fjori Sinoruka, BIRN, January 12, 2024 <https://balkaninsight.com/2024/01/12/albanias-latest-cabinet-changes-are-window-dressing-analyst-says/>

2.3 Governance system: Organisational Organigram



Note: Find the full organigram by the Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation, here <https://meki.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/ORGANIGRAMA.pdf>

Based on the complete organigram by MECI, under the **Secretary General**, are the following important Directories:

- **Directory of Conceptualization and Feasibility of Projects for Economic, Culture and Innovation Affairs**
- **Directory of Authors' Rights (Copyright)**
- **Directory of Sheltering**
- **General Directory of State Property** (under which are the Directory of Policies for the State Property Development, Directory of Privatization)
- **General Directory of the Policies for the Encouragement of Business and Trade Affairs** (Directory of Policies of the Internal Trade Market, Directory of Policies for the Encouragement of Business, Directory of External Trade Affairs)
- **General Directory of Information and Economic Analysis** (Directory of Analysis of Economic Strategies, Directory of Stimulation and Observation)
- **General Directory of Policies for Employment, Skills Development and Social Security** (Directory of Policies for Employment and Migration, Directory of Policies for Professional Skills Development and Inspection, Directory of Relationships between Work, Safety and Health, Directory of Policies for Social Security)
- **General Directory of Innovation and Technology** (Directory of Digital Transformation, Directory of Innovative Projects, Directory of Policies and Strategies for Innovation)
- **General Directory for Regulations and Compliance**
- **Directory of Concessions and Partnerships**
- **General Directory of Economy and Supportive Services**
- **Directory of Interior Auditing**

2.4 Background

The below information is a summary based on the previous Reports on Albania in Compendium, for more details please read **Detailed Compendium Country Profiles in 2011 & 2022**¹⁹

1950–1960:

Cultural policy in Albania was strictly centralized under the communist regime, with the state controlling all cultural production to promote socialist values and suppressing religious and non-conforming cultural expressions.

1960–1970:

The state intensified ideological control, using culture as a tool for propaganda and national unity. Traditional and folk culture were promoted, but always within the framework of socialist realism and strict censorship.

1970–1980:

Isolationist policies deepened; Albania cut cultural ties with both the West and former socialist allies. Cultural life was highly regulated, with emphasis on self-reliance and the glorification of Albanian history and folklore.

1980–1990:

Late communist period saw continued isolation and stagnation in cultural policy. State maintained rigid control, but cracks began to appear as the regime weakened, setting the stage for later reforms.

1990–2000:

With the collapse of communism, Albania opened to the world. Cultural policy shifted towards democratization, pluralism, and reintegration with European cultural networks. The Ministry of Culture was established, and first steps towards decentralization and legal reforms were taken. However this decade is characterized by lack of transparency and government documentation.

2000–2010:

A draft national cultural policy based on European standards was followed, focusing on identity, diversity, and participation. The Law on Local Government (2000) promoted decentralization, giving local authorities more autonomy over cultural matters. Emphasis

¹⁹ Detailed Country Profiles for Albania, Compendium for Cultural Policies and Trends, 2011 by Stefan Çapaliku and Kastriot Cipi and 2022, Blerina Berberi and Kevin Tummers, <https://www.culturalpolicies.net/database/search-by-country/country-profile/download-profile/?id=1>

placed on supporting creativity, cultural heritage, and legal frameworks for cultural institutions. This period starts the increase in transparency and government documentation on culture development.

2010–2020:

Reforms targeted legislation for cinema, theatres, and libraries. There was increased focus on decentralization, multiculturalism, and the integration of culture into democratic and economic development. The Integrated Planning System (IPS) was introduced to align cultural policy with broader public policy goals.

2020–2025:

Albania adopted its first comprehensive National Strategy on Culture (2019–2025). Digitalization accelerated due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with new online cultural offerings. International cooperation grew, and significant EU funding was secured for cultural heritage restoration after the 2019 earthquake. New institutions and legal frameworks were developed, but challenges remain in implementation and decentralization.

In January 2024, the Ministry of Culture was restructured to the Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation, with a cross-sectoral approach and emphasis on digital innovation and creative economic development.

Also, according a study by Ermir Nika on *The Transition of Albanian Art and Culture Facing the Future*²⁰, after the 1990s the reforms on cultural institutions and legal frameworks have been incomplete, there's low public participation especially in rural areas, the cultural sector suffers limited funding compared to European standards, lack of coherent cultural policy, and the support for creative industries and the diaspora, remain minimal.

²⁰ *The Transition of Albanian Art and Culture Facing the Future Challenges*, Ermir Nika, European University of Tirana, 2020 <https://uet.edu.al/polis/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/The-Transition-of-Albanian-Art-and-Culture-Facing-the-Future-Challenges.pdf>

3. Current cultural affairs

3.1 Key developments

The main challenges with policy makers remain a comprehensive collaboration of the public sector with the civil and private sector. There is a high need in modernizing, funding and effectiveness. Albania's economic situation and limited public funding capacity severely constrain cultural policy development. The Culture Portfolio receives a very small budget (less than 0.5% of the national budget or about 1.5% of GDP²¹, which is insufficient to meet the broad statutory obligations and modernize the sector, and cultural activities and institutions are highly centralized in the capital.

The key achievements in Albanian cultural policy include: The adoption of the National Strategy for Culture 2019-2025 and the restructuring of the Ministry of Culture to the Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation, for a cross-sectoral approach. Legislative reforms in recent years, such as laws on cinema, theatres, and libraries, aimed to modernize the cultural legal framework and promote cultural communication and increased efforts to rehabilitate architectural heritage, museums, cultural landscapes and improving infrastructure.

The influence of advocacy by cultural organisations and minority groups has led to the Albanian government adopting support in schools to promote minority traditions and culture²², and also the MECI has supported minority and marginalized community culture projects in the country.

The main challenges remain income from copyrights, low income for the culture sector, risks of brain drain due to low and instability of income, lack of transparency and funding.

Also, use of the internet for cultural purposes in Albania is limited, and it has the lowest rate in Europe. As summarized by Monitor Magazine, about 30% of online users in Europe have subscriptions to films or sports, and 21% for music, while in Albania 7% bought tickets online for culture events, 5% paid for online music streaming, 6% paid for online

²¹ *Culture Statistics 2024*, Ministry of Finance, Public expenditures in culture, INSTAT, p.10: <https://www.instat.gov.al/media/15474/culture-statistics-2024.pdf>

²² *Experts of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Commend Albania on Employment Initiatives for National Minorities*, UNHR, 17 September 2024

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/meeting-summaries/2024/09/experts-committee-economic-social-and-cultural-rights-commend-albania>

platforms for movies, series or sports, 5% paid for online magazines and access to information, and 7% paid for online game streaming²³.

3.2 Key themes

Albania's constitution and legal framework guarantee cultural rights, emphasizing the protection and promotion of cultural heritage and diversity, and the country has committed to the protection and promotion of cultural diversity by aligning with the 2005 UNESCO Convention. Albania has been a member of UNESCO since 1958.

EU alignment and accession remains a priority, and EU funded programs have supported women's empowerment, reconciliation between communities, and the promotion of inclusive cultural practices, while EU funded youth programs such as Erasmus+, the ReLOaD initiative and other culture mobility projects have increased youth participation in civic life.

Recent strategies, such as the 2019–2025 Strategy for Culture, address digitization of cultural expressions and the creative industries and aims to modernize cultural infrastructure, promote new artistic forms, and increase access to digital cultural content, supporting both economic development and broader participation. Cultural heritage, which had previously been promoted as a source of national pride is now seen as a driver for sustainable economic and social development.

The creative industries are increasingly recognized as important for economic growth and international cultural exchange. Legislation supports the development of sectors such as crafts, books, cinematography, and museums, with an emphasis on innovation and competitiveness.

In 2022, The Municipality of Tirana established the Agency for Creative Industries, encompassing film, music, design, and other creative fields to further integrate and develop the creative sector at the city level. Regional initiatives, such as those under the Berlin Process and the Regional Cooperation Council, seek to foster a joint policy approach to creative industries across the Western Balkans, however Albania does not yet have a unified, integrated national policy or strategy specifically dedicated to the creative economy or creative industries.

²³ *The use of internet for culture purposes in Albania is limited, they mainly watch news* (Përdorimi i internetit për qëllime kulturore në Shqipëri i kufizuar, shohin kryesisht vetëm lajme) Monitor Magazine, 23 July 2025 <https://monitor.al/perdorimi-i-internetit-per-qellime-kulturore-ne-shqiperi-i-kufizuar-shohin-kryesisht-vetem-lajmet>

Also, the LGBTQ+ community and organisations for human rights, have been able to receive funding and collaboration with public institutions, embassies and European funds for promotion and support.

Also, in June 2022, the Albanian Ministry of Culture launched a call for international competition for “Arts in Public Spaces”²⁴ in order to “.. make art a significant part of everybody’s everyday life.”

The call included 18 spaces where projects would take place within the boundaries of Albania, as presented by the Prime Minister Edi Rama and the Minister of Culture, Elva Margariti²⁵ with a budget of 200 million Lek (approximately 2 million euros) aiming at this becoming an annual call²⁶. Among 132 applications, besides Albanian artists, other artists from Italy, Greece, Turkey, Poland, China, India, Mexico and Pakistan, only 8 projects were selected for Tirana, Kavaja, Divjaka and Malesia e Madhe²⁷.

This “new” initiative from the Albanian Ministry of Culture, with the support of the Prime Ministry, is not new at all. Every previous government, including the socialist, communist, democratic ones, has always had its sculpture and art projects in public spaces, reflecting their own taste, agenda and propaganda, through a top down approach.

In 2019, the UNESCO IFCD funded project “Engaging Tirana’s communities in public arts and policy development”²⁸ had several outputs, where a bottom up approach highlighted recommendations for community engagement in the decision making of art and artistic, cultural expressions in public spaces. The following outputs and recommendations, were not included in the National Culture Strategy from the Albanian Ministry of Culture in January 2020: Public Arts Tirana (Report on Surveys), Report Public Recommendations for Policy and Action Plan for Public Arts, Public Art Policy and Action Plan- Recommendations

²⁴ Open Call AHP, Ministry of Culture, 24 June 2022, <https://kultura.gov.al/en/thirrja-publike-ahp/>

²⁵ Revitalisation of public spaces through art (VIDEO/ Rivalizimi i hapësirave publike përmes artit, Rama prezanton projektin për 18 vepra në të gjithë Shqipërinë: Do të kenë impakt në jetën e komunitetit), Balkan Web, 24 June 2022, <https://www.balkanweb.com/rivalizimi-i-hapesirave-publike-permes-artit-rama-prezanton-projektin-per-18-vepra-ne-te-gjithe-shqiperine-do-te-kenë-impakt-ne-jetën-e-komunitetit/#gsc.tab=0>

²⁶ Rama: The Government gives 200 million Lek for the initiative “Art in Public Spaces, and the ambition is to become an annual program (Rama: Qeveria jep 200 milionë lekë për nismën “Art në hapësirat publike” dhe ambicia është të kthehet në një program të përvitshëm) Lexo.al, 24 June 2022 <https://lexo.al/2022/06/rama-qeveria-jep-200-milione-leke-per-nismen-art-ne-hapesirat-publike-dhe-ambicia-eshte-te-kthehet-ne-nje-program-te-pervitshem/>

²⁷ Art in Public Spaces, 132 Projects Applied, 8 selected (Art në Hapësira Publike, Konkurren 132 projekte, Shpallen 8 fituesit), GazetaSI.al, 25 October 2022 <https://gazetasi.al/art-ne-hapesira-publike-konkurruan-132-projekte-shpallen-8-fituesit/>

²⁸ Engaging Tirana’s communities in public arts and policy development, UNESCO IFCD Fund, 2020 <https://www.unesco.org/creativity/en/policy-monitoring-platform/engaging-tiranas-communities-public-arts-and-policy-development>

for Civil, Public and Private Partnership, HARP ParkON- Engaging Tirana's communities in Public Art and Policy²⁹. Also, these recommendations and findings were not taken into consideration by the "Arts in Public Spaces" program by the Albanian Ministry of Culture in 2022.

3.3 International Cultural Cooperation

The main key topics are need for more funding, increase in transparency and engagement in decision making processes. Several consultation rounds with the civil society are not implemented or followed up leading to burn out of the cultural professionals.

The main actors in the context of Albanian national and international cultural cooperation are:

- Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation (MICE) and its subordinate institutes
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Municipality of Tirana and other Municipalities
- EU (European Commission, Council of Europe)
- Albanian American Development Foundation
- Albanian Universities
- UNESCO
- UNDP
- Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO)
- Anna Lindh Foundation
- Union for the Mediterranean
- ICESCO (Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization)
- Several cultural country, government agreements such as with Italy, Germany, Turkey, France, Spain, USA, China, Japan, Canada, Qatar, Croatia, Serbia, Northern Macedonia, Kosovo
- Various NGOs, many working with EU, UN and the above mentioned countries' funds

Below some recent events and activities related to international cultural cooperation:

²⁹ UNESCO IFCD "Engaging Tirana's Communities in Public Arts and Policy", Academia.edu, 2019, <https://independent.academia.edu/blerinaberberi>

June 2025, ALF - ALForum, Theme: The Dialogue Effect. The ALF together with the Municipality of Tirana and the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania will bring together around 1,000 participants including civil society and academic entities, young leaders, media outlets, influential figures, governments and institutions representatives, policymakers and other relevant stakeholders from 43 countries to transform the Euro-Mediterranean region.

- In 2025, Tirana and Alexandria are Co-Mediterranean Capitals of Culture and Dialogue, Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)
- In 2025, the Turkish-Albanian governments' completed the restoration of 250 year old Ottoman Lead Mosque in Shkodra
- In 2025 showed support for the UN Group of Friends of Culture³⁰
- In 2025 The "Tirana Training Center" for creative youth began as a collaboration with the United States to grow of cinematography and audiovisual productions in the country, providing professional training for up to 400 students simultaneously in areas such as acting, directing, animation, production, writing, and more³¹.
- In 2024 Albania held the Presidency of Central European Initiative (CEI)
- In 2024 Albanian held a six-month rotating presidency of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC)
- In 2024 Tirana's Agency for Creative Industries and the British Council held a professional two-day event to contribute to the development of the joint strategy recommendations.
- In 2024 the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) co-organized the Conference on Creative Economy in Tirana in partnership with Albania's Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation, the Municipality of Tirana, and the Young Professionals Network of Albania.
- In 2023 Albania was elected a member of the UNESCO Executive Board for the period 2023-2027
- In 2023 Tirana was European City of Sport by ACES Europe
- In 2022 Tirana was European Youth Capital by European Youth Forum
- In 2020, Albania and Kosovo signed a co-production agreement to regulate and encourage film co-productions between the two countries

³⁰ *Statement of the GoF of Culture*, United Nations Group of Friends of Culture. 6 February 2025

<https://ambasadat.gov.al/united-nations/newsroom/culture-as-enabler-of-sustainable-development/>

³¹ *Tirana Training Center: A New Opportunity for Creative Youth*, Media and Information Agency of Albania. January 2025, <https://mia.gov.al/en/tirana-training-center-a-new-opportunity-for-creative-youth/>

4. Cultural Institutions

4.1 Overview

In 2018, experts, artists and activists of the Independent Cultural Scene (SPK) published a Manifesto for Culture based on Article 11 of the Constitution of the Republic of Albania on the equality of public funds for the state and non-state sectors, and signed a memorandum with the Ministry of Culture³².

Points of the Manifesto include: Art and culture funding in Albania to meet a European level of 2%, while it currently accounts for only 0.4 percent of the GDP, ranking last in the region and Europe; Creation of a dedicated ARTS Center as an instrument that achieves decentralization of artistic production; Programs to increase professional skills in cultural entrepreneurship; Direct support from the state of organizations and entities that result in winners from European Union cultural programs such as Creative Europe; Including the level of employment in the cultural sector within the National Statistical Program (INSTAT) as an indicator of well-being; Improvements to the law on sponsorship for arts and culture, reviewing and implementing a reduced VAT tax rate in the field of art and easing tax obligations in general; encouraging business investment in art through the adoption of a special law or as special provisions in the law "On Art and Culture"; Supporting marginalized artists through the creation of a special fund; Offering unused or abandoned state facilities and giving them free use for long-term cultural projects.

In 2025, the Independent Culture Scene, re-published the Manifesto prior to the General Election stating that none of the points have been implemented³³.

³² Memorandum of Understanding between the Independent Culture Scene and the Ministry of Culture for Cooperation and Preliminary Consultation for Changes in the Law Nr. 10352, Date 18.11.2010 "For Arts And Culture" changed, Protocolled Nr. 2529, Date 13.04.2018 (Memorandum Mirëkuptimi midis Skenës së Pavarur Kulturore – SPK dhe Ministrisë së Kulturës për Bashkëpunimin dhe Konsultimin Paraprak për Ndryshimet në Ligjin Nr. 10352, Datë 18.11.2010 'Për Artin dhe Kulturën' i Ndryshuar. Protokolluar: Nr. 2529, Dt. 13.04.2018)

³³ Reactivation of the Manifesto by the Independent Culture Scene, None of the agreement points was followed up (Riaktivizohet Manifest i SPK, Asnjë nga pikat e marrëveshjes së 2018 me MK nuk u zbatua), Andi Teplean, 23 February 2025, Gazeta Sot, <https://sot.com.al/kultura/riaktivizohet-manifest-i-spk-andi-tepelena-asnje-nga-pikat-e-marreveshjes-se-2018-me-mk-nuk-u-zbatua/>

4.2 Data on selected public and private cultural institutions

Table 1: Cultural institutions, by sector and domain

Domain	Cultural Institution (Subdomain)	Public Sector	Private Sector
		Number (YEAR, latest data)	Number (YEAR, latest data)
Cultural Heritage	Cultural heritage sites (recognised)	2025 3 UNESCO World Heritage Cultural Sites	
	National cultural monuments	2022 2028 ³⁴	
	Archaeological sites	9 ³⁵	
	Castles	7 ³⁶	
Museums	Museum institutions	12 ³⁷	
Archives	Archive institutions	11 ³⁸	
Visual arts	Public art galleries / exhibition halls	2 -National Art Gallery (Closed for Renovations) -National History Museum	

³⁴ https://www.culturalpolicies.net/country_profile/albania-3-1/

³⁵ INSTAT Culture Statistics 2024 (Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation) <https://www.instat.gov.al/media/15474/culture-statistics-2024.pdf>

³⁶ INSTAT Culture Statistics 2024 (Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation) <https://www.instat.gov.al/media/15474/culture-statistics-2024.pdf>

³⁷ INSTAT Culture Statistics 2024 (Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation) <https://www.instat.gov.al/media/15474/culture-statistics-2024.pdf>

³⁸ Centre for Openness and Dialogue - Network of Archives. https://cod.al/?page_id=177

Performing arts	<i>Scenic and stable spaces for theatre</i>	5 -National Theatre -National Opera and Ballet -National Puppet Theatre -Ar Turbina -National Circus	
	<i>Concert houses</i>		
	<i>Theatre companies</i>		
	<i>Dance and ballet companies</i>		
	<i>Symphonic orchestras</i>		
Libraries	<i>Libraries</i>	366 Public ³⁹ 2000+ Public School ⁴¹	100+ private ⁴² 1100+ Private School ⁴³
Audiovisual	<i>Cinemas</i>		2021 19 screens ⁴⁴
	<i>Broadcasting organisations</i>	2025 1 (RTSH) national TV (16 channels) and Radio (11 channels)	2025 5 national licenses 25 regional licenses (totals: 56 audio broadcasters; 38 audiovisual broadcasters;

³⁹ Public Libraries in Albania, Albanian Embassy Canada: <https://ambasadat.gov.al/canada/en/kultura/>

⁴⁰ Libraries in Albania, Centre for Openness and Dialogue: https://cod.al/?page_id=177

⁴¹ Statistics on Educational Institutions in Albania, Eurydice: <https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/euryperia/albania/statistics-educational-institutions>

⁴² Libraries in Albania, Centre for Openness and Dialogue: https://cod.al/?page_id=177

⁴³ Statistics on Educational Institutions in Albania, Eurydice: <https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/euryperia/albania/statistics-educational-institutions>

⁴⁴ Annual Report 2022, International Union of Cinemas: https://www.unic-cinemas.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Publications/2022/UNIC_Annual_Report_2022.pdf

			66 cable retransmission subjects; 2 private satellite platforms; 17 OTT/IPTV repeaters; 2 Video On Demand (VOD) ⁴⁵
Interdisciplinary	<i>Socio-cultural centres / cultural houses</i>		
Others (please explain)		2 -Children Nationals Theatre -Centre of Folklore Activities (QKVF)	

5. Cultural Funding

National Grants Program for Culture and Creativity for 2025 total budget is 471.9 million leke. Open calls for funding for 2025⁴⁶ include:

- Fund for the Call “National Representation and Mobility” 2025, total fund is 20,000,000 lek.
- Fund for the Call “Artisans’ Fund” 2025, total fund is 30,000,000 lek.
- Fund for the Call “Creativity Fund” 2025, total fund is 30,000,000 lek.
- Fund for the Call “Support for Cultural Programs of Organizations”, total fund is 60,000,000 lek.
- Fund for the Call “Cultural and Creative Events 2025”, total fund is 100,000,000 lek.

⁴⁵ AUDIOVISUAL MEDIA LANDSCAPE IN ALBANIA, Audiovisual Media Authority (AMA,) April 2025 [https://www.braf.info/upload/files/BRAF%2011th%20Annual%20Meeting/Country%20Report%20\(Albania%20AMA\).pdf](https://www.braf.info/upload/files/BRAF%2011th%20Annual%20Meeting/Country%20Report%20(Albania%20AMA).pdf)

⁴⁶ Open Call for Grants for Projects in Culture, MECI, 2025 <https://meki.gov.al/thirrje-per-projekt-propozime/projekt-propozime-ne-kulture-2/>

In the Committee on Education and Public Information, for the discussion in principle of the draft law "On the Budget for 2025", regarding the culture portfolio. 571 million lekë for programs, activities, calls, artistic and cultural calendar, support for artists and organizations, art-residencies, national representation and internationalization, expansion of the creative economy and industry network, cultural mobility, cultural tourism, talents and innovation, promotion of identity and heritage, cultural diplomacy, artistic and professional education and training, crafts, folklore and traditions, revitalization of intangible heritage, social cohesion.

471.9 million lekë for the National Grants Program for Culture and Creativity for 2025, increased by +45%.

1.78 billion lek for investments, or 40% of MECI's budget. Three-year revitalization program for art and culture centers and facilities, digital systems and platforms, equipment, technology for residences and services, conservation, rehabilitation, restoration and reconstruction, improvement of the physical condition of cultural heritage sites, infrastructure and access, design and management plans, ongoing implementation of capital investment projects.⁴⁷

5.1 Overview

The 2025 budget for culture will see a 4.5% increase for culture and heritage⁴⁸. The budget for Culture and Creative Grants increased in 2025 by 45% to 471.9 million leke.

An amount of 571 million lekë for programs, activities, calls, artistic and cultural calendar, support for artists and organizations, art-residencies, national representation and internationalization, expansion of the creative economy and industry network, cultural mobility, cultural tourism, talents and innovation, promotion of identity and heritage, cultural diplomacy, artistic and professional education and training, crafts, folklore and traditions, revitalization of intangible heritage, social cohesion. +55% compared to the initial budget of 2024.+55% compared to the initial budget of 2024⁴⁹.

Culture will receive 40% of the entire budget foreseen for investments by the Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation, a figure of 1.78 billion leke or about 178 million euros. Investment priority is given to two basic programs: one for Art and one for Cultural Heritage. The budget foresees that a special focus will also be given to building a talent base, by investing in children and young people, in expanding the network of cultural and

⁴⁷ Budget Announcement for Culture, MECI, 2025 <https://meki.gov.al/newsroom/buxheti-meki-2025-kultura/>

⁴⁸ Approval of 2025 Budget for Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation, MECI, 2024 <https://meki.gov.al/newsroom/miratimi-per-buxhetin-e-vitet-2025-per-ministrine-e-ekonomise-kultures-dhe-inovacionit/>

⁴⁹Announcement of 2025 Budget for Culture, MECI, 2024 <https://meki.gov.al/newsroom/buxheti-meki-2025-kultura/>

creative industries, to increase socio-economic value. According to the Minister, "An advanced electronic alarm and anti-theft system will be installed in the main halls of the National Library." and "10 cultural monument buildings are being restored, the church of Shën Kolli in Krutje, Lushnja, part of the Spaç prison is being rehabilitated. Another project is the restoration of the Church of the Evangelization in Kozara, the restoration of the Archaeological Museum in Korça, the drafting of the Arbëresh House project, and in 2026, investment in this museum will begin," the minister announced⁵⁰.

Expenditures for the entertainment, culture and religious affairs function are expected to reach 12.1 billion lek, aiming to finance important projects for the preservation of culture and tradition, religious coexistence, the development of art and the increase of cultural tourism in Albania.

From January to June 2025, 569,089 people visited cultural heritage sites across the country, marking a 74% increase compared to the same period in 2023, with revenue from cultural tourism rising by 119% over 2023 figures⁵¹.

In relation to "Forecast of Public Investments with Internal Financing 2025-2027"⁵² the Ministry of Finance includes the Planned Total Budget for 2025 for the Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation, where the Total Budget for the Culture is 3,281,462,000 Leke (33,455,740 euro), while Total for Culture Heritage and Museums is 272,500,000 Leke (2,778,240 euro) and for Arts and Culture Total of 1,467,500,000 Leke (14,961,714 euro).

Also, as in Chart 1. below, Entertainment, Culture and Religious Affairs have the lowest budgets, and Chart 2, shows 0.8% of Public Expenditures for 2025 for this category.

⁵⁰ 2025 Budget is 55% Higher for Art and Heritage; 40% of all MECI Investments, Blerina Goce, November 6, 2024

<https://shqiptarja.com/lajm/buxheti-i-2025es-per-kulturen-gonxhe-55-me-i-larte-arti-dhe-trashegimia-40-te-gjithe-investimeve-te-meki>

⁵¹ Cultural Heritage Sites In Albania Record 74 visitor growth in early 2025, RTSH, 2025.

<https://rtsh.al/rti/en/cultural-heritage-sites-in-albania-record-74-visitor-growth-in-early-2025/>

⁵² Parashikimi i Investimeve Publike me Financim te Brendshem 2025-2027, Ministry of Finance, <https://financa.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Lista-e-Projekteve-te-Investimeve-Publike-2025-2027.xlsx>

Funksione të tjera me peshë më të ulët në buxhet janë: **Argëtimi, Kultura dhe Çështje Fetare** (6.3 miliardë lekë apo 0.76% e totalit të shpenzimeve) dhe **Mbrojtja e Mjedisit** (1.24 miliardë lekë në peshe 0.15% të totalit të shpenzimeve buxhetore).

Data.AI: Argëtimi, Kultura dhe Çështjet Fetare

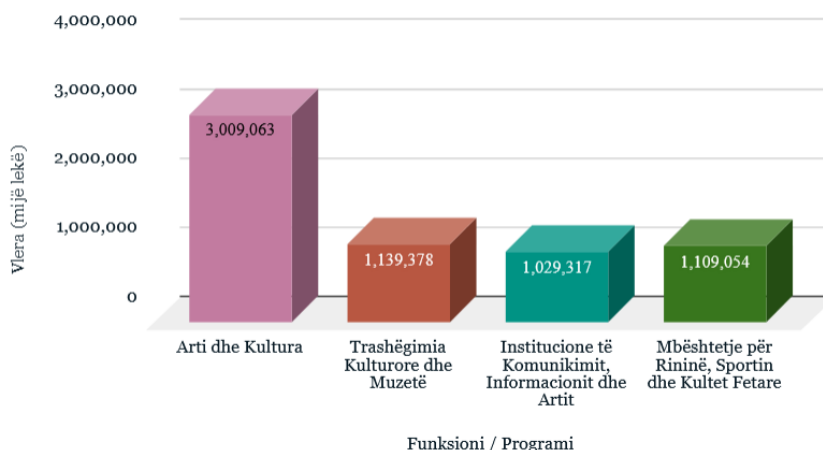


Chart1. **Data.AI (Follow the money)** <https://ndiqparate.al/?p=22807>

Data.AI: Shpenzimet publike 2025 sipas funksioneve të qeverisë

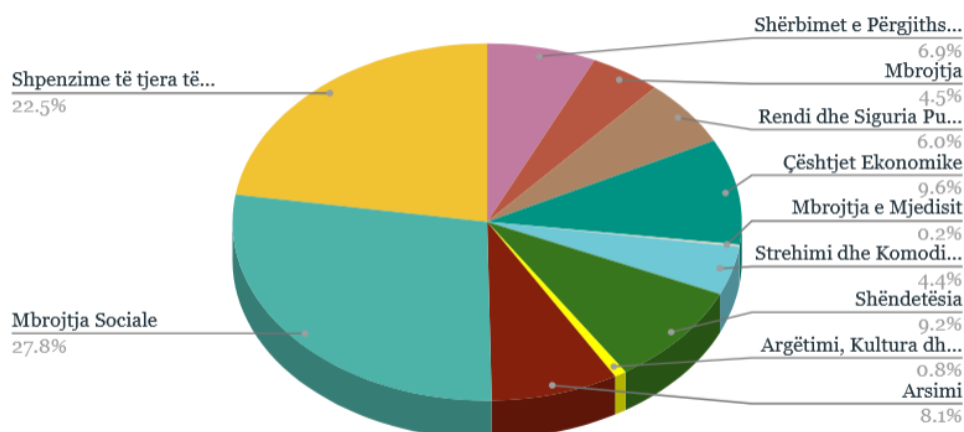


Chart 2. Data.AI (Follow the money) <https://ndiqparate.al/?p=22807>

The Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation, has not compiled or published statistical data on private funding, sponsorships, or donations to the cultural sector.

However the table below from the Ministry of Finance, indicates in general the latest total foreign financing for: cultural heritage and museums; art and culture;

Also as in the below Table 1, from the Ministry of Finance, the Foreign Investments for Arts and

Culture is 120,000,000 Leke (1,223,884 euro), and for Culture Heritage and Museums the foreign investment 2025 is 20,000,000 Leke (203,980 euro).

Kodi	Emërtimi i institucionit / programit	Totali i shp. korrente	Financim i brendshëm	Financimi i huaj	Totali i shp. kapitale	Totali i shpenzimeve buxhetore
12	Ministria e Ekonomisë, Kulturës dhe Inovacionit	51,652,970	4,292,669	974,690	5,267,359	56,920,329
01110	Planifikimi, menaxhimi dhe administrimi	446,979	80,000	0	80,000	526,979
08220	Trashëgimia kulturore dhe muzetë	846,878	272,500	20,000	292,500	1,139,378
08230	Arti dhe kultura	1,521,563	1,467,500	120,000	1,587,500	3,109,063
01150	Mbështetje për inovacionin dhe teknologjinë	296,388	867,200	0	867,200	1,163,588
04130	Mbështetje për zhvillim ekonomik	447,619	62,000	164,690	226,690	674,309
04160	Mbështetje për mbikëq. e tregut, infrast. e cilës. dhe pron. industr.	379,922	12,000	0	12,000	391,922
10220	Sigurimi shoqëror	40,800,090	0	0	0	40,800,090
10550	Tregu i punës	2,775,547	151,000	100,000	251,000	3,026,547
04170	Inspektimi në punë	260,984	22,000	0	22,000	282,984
09240	Arsimi i mesëm (profesional)	3,132,000	808,469	570,000	1,378,469	4,510,469
06190	Strehimi	745,000	550,000	0	550,000	1,295,000

Table 1. Normative Act 11 June 2025, pp.3 Source <https://financa.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/AKTI-NORMATIV-NR.6-DATE-11.06.2025.pdf>

Other Funding bodies include the Swiss Cultural Fund Albania, SDC, "EU4Culture", "EU-IPA", CC4WB, "RYCO", TAP, AADF, American Bank of Investments, etc.

The Turkish government has made significant recent investments for religious culture such around 6 million euros for repairs to the Lead Mosque in Shkodra^{53 54}, and 30 million euros for the construction of the Namazgah Mosque in Tirana⁵⁵, which was inaugurated by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in 2024 as well as in 2015 when construction began.

Several recent announcements of decreased, paused or terminated funding include those by SDC and USAID. The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) will end its bilateral development programs with Albania by end 2028⁵⁶, while in 2025, The US Embassy in Tirana notified Albanian institutions that it had suspended support funds

⁵³ Turkish Government invests 6 million euros to protect lead mosque from floods, Euronews, 2022.

<https://euronews.al/en/turkish-government-invests-e6-mln-euros-to-protect-lead-mosque-from-floods/>

⁵⁴ Lead Mosque in Shkodra inaugurated, RTSH, 2025. <https://rtsh.al/rti/en/lead-mosque-inaugurated-shkodras-mufti-a-dream-come-true/>

⁵⁵ Turkish leader inaugurates grand Tirana mosque construction, Alarabiya, 2015.

<https://english.alarabiya.net/life-style/art-and-culture/2015/05/13/Turkish-leader-inagurates-grand-Tirana-mosque-construction>

⁵⁶ The Swiss government is ending its development aid programmes for Albania, Bangladesh and Zambia. SWI, January 29, 2025 <https://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/foreign-affairs/programs-for-albania-bangladesh-and-zambia-to-be-discontinued/88798306>

following the signing of the executive order by President Donald Trump⁵⁷.

In March 2025, the World Bank approved an 80 million euro loan for modernization and digital transformation of the Albanian public service, including the establishment of Youth Innovation Centers to teach digital skills to youth, and the deployment of 200 education *SmartLabs* within primary schools to improve numeracy, literacy and digital skills⁵⁸. This builds on a previous \$65 million loan program aimed at enhancing the accessibility and quality of key public services⁵⁹.

5.2 Public cultural expenditure by level of government

MUNICIPAL

The smaller municipalities rely heavily on state transfer funding, grants and national policies for development in art and culture, compared larger municipalities like Tirana, which generates a bigger proportion of its revenue from its own taxes and fees.

Many local governments combine the culture sector with tourism, recreation and sports or other departments and some do not specifically differentiate between expenditures. Transparency of budget distribution remains an issue, and budget details are sometimes released as highlights, quotes/tweets or graphics rather than complete data sheets.

In 2025, a group of young artists from the Active Center for Durrës created the exhibition "Art with the Budget" to highlight how public funds are spent in the city, visually showing through art how public funds are distributed for the 2024-2026 budget, also questioning policymakers' priorities, transparency and the effectiveness of public spending. Artist Klaudio Hyseni emphasized that the exhibition aimed to engage citizens more in community issues, stating "We have tried to bring the municipal budget closer to the people so they can see how local government uses their taxes, encouraging them to get more involved in community matters."⁶⁰

⁵⁷ *U.S. Embassy Announces Suspension of Funds for Albanian Institutions*, Euronews Albania, January 29, 2025 <https://euronews.al/en/u-s-embassy-announces-suspension-of-funds-for-albanian-institutions/>

⁵⁸ *World Bank Approves Additional Support to Advance Albania's Public Service Transformation*, World Bank, March 10, 2025. https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2025/03/10/world-bank-approves-additional-support-to-advance-albania-s-public-service-transformation?cid=eca_fb_albania_xx_ext

⁵⁹ *World Bank's New Country Partnership Framework Supports Greener and More Resilient and Inclusive Growth in Albania*, World Bank, March 16, 2023. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2023/03/16/world-bank-new-country-partnership-framework-supports-greener-and-more-resilient-and-inclusive-growth-in-albania>

⁶⁰ *How Are Public Funds Spent? Citizens of Durrës Showcase It Through Art!* Euronews, Feb 2025.

As part of the EU integration process, since 2017, Albanian municipalities have participated in the ReLOaD programme⁶¹ funded by the European Union and implemented by UNDP to increase civil society participation and transparent project based funding from municipal budgets. Many culture and art organizations have benefited from paired municipal and EU/UNDP funding. The Municipalities of Durrës, Diber, Elbasan, Korce, Librazhd, Prrenjas, Tropoje, Permet, Lezhe, Shkoder and Tirana were the first to join ReLOaD and commit to co finance 20% to 25% of the budget including to activities in culture and art. ReLOaD2 involved 13 partner municipalities including six new partner municipalities of Kamëz, Kavajë, Kukës, Lushnje, Patos, and Saranda, along with the continuation of ReLOaD1 partners Elbasan, Korçë, Roskovec, Përmet, Lezhë, Shkodër and Tirana.

ReLOaD3 was announced in 2025, aiming to establish partnerships with 4 more municipalities in Albania that have not previously been with the programme, with an amount from 80,000 – 130,000 USD for each of the municipalities for around 40 months.

Under the terms of the first ReLOaD Program in 2017, the Municipality of Shkodra agreed to co-finance 22% of the value of the ReLOaD project and the commitment to organize three public calls (period 2018 - 2020), of which, the first two were financed from the allocated grant amount (UNDP funds and 22% municipality co-financing) and the last call was financed from the municipality's own funds. All Calls for Project Proposals were carried out in accordance with VKB no. 69, dated 30.10.2017 on the "Approval of the Memorandum of Understanding between the United Nations Development Program and the Municipality of Shkodra" as well as the approval of the LOD methodology for financing civil society organizations."

For the third call, titled "Cultural heritage, artistic and cultural events" in 2020, 9 culture based CSOs applied and 5 received funding. The total grant to the Municipality of Shkodra for this Call was 10,840,000 ALL, while the value of the projects awarded to CSOs was 6,630,500 ALL.⁶² In 2021 the total funding given to 7 CSOs under the call "Cultural heritage, artistic and socio-cultural events" was 7,190,000 ALL. Cultural activities have also been included in other funding calls for economic development, tourism and other categories.

<https://euronews.al/en/how-are-public-funds-spent-citizens-of-durres-showcase-it-through-art/>

⁶¹ Regional Programme on Local Democracy in Western Balkans (ReLOaD), UNDP and EU:

<https://www.undp.org/albania/projects/regional-programme-local-democracy-western-balkans-reload>

⁶² Information on cooperation of Shkodra Municipality with Civil Society Organizations under the ReLOaD Programme, Municipality of Shkodra, October 6, 2023: <https://bashkiashkoder.gov.al/bashkia-dhe-shoqeria-civile/>

In Shkodra, grant funding for civil society organizations in arts, culture and recreational events is given through the 'Arts and Culture Council' which was established by the Municipal Council based on a Decision of the Council of Ministers and a specific instruction of the Minister of Culture.

The Municipality of Shkodra also allocates financial support⁶³ to cultural and artistic performances and activities, adapting as much as possible to public and private outdoor spaces in the city, as well as funding the Marin Barleti Library, Museums, Art Gallery, "Migjeni" Theater, Cultural Centers and "Republika" Cinema.

The Municipality of Tirana operates a grant programme for sports and culture, managed by the Department of Culture and Cultural Heritage through the Arts and Culture Council. The Municipality of Tirana awards funding for arts and culture projects by CSOs, businesses and individuals throughout the year, based on decisions of the Arts and Culture Council, which meets monthly. A total of 100 projects were funded during 2020 (200 applications) and 140 projects were funded during 2021 (300 applications)⁶⁴.

Tirana Municipality allocated 100 million ALL (approximately 1 million euros) for the implementation of activities for the Tirana European Youth Capital programme in 2022, which was co-financed by European Youth Forum and the Government of Albania. The funds were transferred from the municipal budget to the National Youth Congress as a grant/direct transfer.

Tirana Municipality also directly funds cultural institutions like museums, theaters, and art galleries and allocates funds for the restoration and maintenance of historical buildings, monuments, and cultural heritage sites. According to data from Altax.al, in 2023 Tirana spent 2% of the budget on culture and art⁶⁵.

Elbasan Municipality currently spends about 1.8% of the budget on 'cultural services' ⁶⁶. Their newly announced "Action Plan 2025-2027" ⁶⁷ aims to establish systems for the online publication of local legislation, transparency programs, budgets, and financial reports,

⁶³ *Recreation, Culture and Religion*, Municipality of Shkodra, January 2025: <https://bashkiashkoder.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/6.-AF-REelacioni-Sporti-Kultura-pas-komisioneve-23.01.2025.pdf>

⁶⁴ *Comparative assessment of municipal financing modalities of disbursing funds to Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) Regional Programme on Local Democracy in the Western Balkans 2 (ReLOaD2)*, UNDP, Sabina Ymeri, 2025. https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2025-03/comparative_assessment_albania.pdf

⁶⁵ *Local Tax Burden in Tirana Municipality in 2023*, ALTAX, May 9, 2024: <https://altax.al/en/local-tax-burden-in-tirana-municipality-in-2023/>

⁶⁶ *Gender Responsive Budgeting in the Municipality of Elbasan - Watchdog Report*, Women Forum Elbasan, 2020-2021. https://www.gadc.org.al/media/files/upload/Watchdog%20report_WFE.pdf

⁶⁷ Action plan – Elbasan, Albania, 2025 – 2027, Open Government Partnership, July 2025. <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/action-plan-elbasan-albania-2025-2027/>

allowing citizens full access to public information as well as participatory budgeting where citizens are directly involved in identifying investment priorities and allocating local funds.

The municipality of Saranda makes direct transfers to art and culture CSOs to deliver activities. Other municipalities provide amounts for projects but may lack funding and public data.

Areas like UNESCO Designated Berat and Gjirokastra receive substantial funding for 'culture' including from their municipalities, and much of it is given to restoration of heritage buildings and redevelopment of roads and bridges.

The "EU for Municipalities" project has also been introduced to support strategic processes for local governments to implement their plans and strategies, such as 198,742.00 euros in EU Funding paired with 22,082.00 euros of National funding to the Municipality of Gjirokastra for construction of the traditional Roma craft market, to brand and promote local handicraft products, organize a Community Center and stakeholder training⁶⁸.

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A report and roundtable on "Support mechanisms and financial resources for visual art in Albania"⁶⁹ by Çelik Rruplli and Pavjo Gjini, from UNNA and ArtNexus, stated that the 2024 budget for culture in the new Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation (MECI) reached about 44 million euros, up from the 23 million euros the former Ministry of Culture had in 2018. Compared to neighboring countries, North Macedonia in 2021 supported 2254 artistic projects, with a total budget of over 50 million euros, while the Kosovo Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports for 2023 reached 57 million euros. During the roundtable, the Deputy minister of MECI, Lira Pipa emphasized the decision-making aspects of the Ministry, presenting some of the priorities for the future, including the revision of financing schemes to increase transparency and stability; involving artists in decision-making processes and increasing the budget for art and culture, noting this position and the strategy until now has been more focused on buildings and the restoration of cultural institutions, but now this focus will change. The need to create operational support schemes for art and culture organizations was emphasized during the roundtable and the Deputy Minister said that the idea of creating 3-year support

⁶⁸ Construction of the local traditional Roma craft market in Gjirokastër, EU4Municipalities, 2025.

<https://eu4municipalities.al/en/gjirokaster-municipality/>

⁶⁹ *Roundtable on funding mechanisms and financial support for the visual arts in Albania*. United Nations Association Albania, March 2024.

<https://arca.al/en/articles/roundtable-on-funding-mechanisms-and-finacial-support-for-the-visual-a/>

schemes for organizations stabilized in the cultural ecosystem is being considered, adding "The budget is insufficient to cover all the needs related to the development of activities, festivals, films - documentaries, etc." ⁷⁰.

As part of the EU integration process, since 2017, Albanian municipalities have participated in the ReLOaD programme⁷¹ funded by the European Union and implemented by UNDP to increase civil society participation and transparent project based funding from municipal budgets. Many culture and art organizations have benefited from paired municipal and EU/UNDP funding. The Municipalities of Durrës, Diber, Elbasan, Korce, Librazhd, Prrenjas, Tropoje, Permet, Lezhe, Shkoder and Tirana were the first to join ReLOaD and commit to co finance 20% to 25% of the budget including to activities in culture and art. ReLOaD2 involved 13 partner municipalities including six new partner municipalities of Kamëz, Kavajë, Kukës, Lushnjë, Patos, and Saranda, along with the continuation of ReLOaD1 partners Elbasan, Korçë, Roskovec, Përmet, Lezhë, Shkodër and Tirana.

ReLOaD3 was announced in 2025, aiming to establish partnerships with 4 more municipalities in Albania that have not previously been with the programme, with an amount from 80,000 – 130,000 USD for each of the municipalities for around 40 months.

Under the terms of the first ReLOaD Program in 2017, the Municipality of Shkodra agreed to co-finance 22% of the value of the ReLOaD project and the commitment to organize three public calls (period 2018 - 2020), of which, the first two were financed from the allocated grant amount (UNDP funds and 22% municipality co-financing) and the last call was financed from the municipality's own funds. All Calls for Project Proposals were carried out in accordance with VKB no. 69, dated 30.10.2017 on the "Approval of the Memorandum of Understanding between the United Nations Development Program and the Municipality of Shkodra" as well as the approval of the LOD methodology for financing civil society organizations."

For the third call, titled "Cultural heritage, artistic and cultural events" in 2020, 9 culture based CSOs applied and 5 received funding. The total grant to the Municipality of Shkodra for this Call was 10,840,000 ALL, while the value of the projects awarded to CSOs was

⁷⁰ The poor funds of the Ministry of Culture, visual art in Albania have received only crumbs, Citizens, Elira Kadriu, March 2024
https://citizens.al/en/2024/03/29/fondet-e-mjera-te-ministrise-se-kultures-arti-pamor-ne-shqiperi-ka-marre-vetem-therrime/#google_vignette

⁷¹ Regional Programme on Local Democracy in Western Balkans (ReLOaD), UNDP and EU:
<https://www.undp.org/albania/projects/regional-programme-local-democracy-western-balkans-reload>

6,630,500 ALL.⁷² In 2021 the total funding given to 7 CSOs under the call “Cultural heritage, artistic and socio-cultural events” was 7,190,000 ALL. Cultural activities have also been included in other funding calls for economic development, tourism and other categories.

In Shkodra, grant funding for civil society organizations in arts, culture and recreational events is given through the ‘Arts and Culture Council’ which was established by the Municipal Council based on a Decision of the Council of Ministers and a specific instruction of the Minister of Culture.

The Municipality of Shkodra also allocates financial support⁷³ to cultural and artistic performances and activities, adapting as much as possible to public and private outdoor spaces in the city, as well as funding the Marin Barleti Library, Museums, Art Gallery, “Migjeni” Theater, Cultural Centers and “Republika” Cinema.

The Municipality of Tirana operates a grant programme for sports and culture, managed by the Department of Culture and Cultural Heritage through the Arts and Culture Council. The Municipality of Tirana awards funding for arts and culture projects by CSOs, businesses and individuals throughout the year, based on decisions of the Arts and Culture Council, which meets monthly. A total of 100 projects were funded during 2020 (200 applications) and 140 projects were funded during 2021 (300 applications).⁷⁴

Tirana Municipality allocated 100 million ALL (approximately 1 million euros) for the implementation of activities for the Tirana European Youth Capital programme in 2022, which was co-financed by European Youth Forum and the Government of Albania. The funds were transferred from the municipal budget to the National Youth Congress as a grant/direct transfer.

Tirana Municipality also directly funds cultural institutions like museums, theaters, and art galleries and allocates funds for the restoration and maintenance of historical buildings, monuments, and cultural heritage sites. According to data from Altax.al, in 2023 Tirana spent 2% of the budget on culture and art⁷⁵.

⁷² *Information on cooperation of Shkodra Municipality with Civil Society Organizations under the ReLOad Programme*, Municipality of Shkodra, October 6, 2023: <https://bashkiashkoder.gov.al/bashkia-dhe-shoqeria-civile/>

⁷³ *Recreation, Culture and Religion*, Municipality of Shkodra, January 2025: <https://bashkiashkoder.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/6.-AF-REelacioni-Sporti-Kultura-pas-komisioneve-23.01.2025.pdf>

⁷⁴ *Comparative assessment of municipal financing modalities of disbursing funds to Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) Regional Programme on Local Democracy in the Western Balkans 2 (ReLOaD2)*, UNDP, Sabina Ymeri, 2025. https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2025-03/comparative_assessment_albania.pdf

⁷⁵ *Local Tax Burden in Tirana Municipality in 2023*, ALTAX, May 9, 2024: <https://altax.al/en/local-tax-burden-in-tirana-municipality-in-2023/>

Elbasan Municipality currently spends about 1.8% of the budget on 'cultural services' ⁷⁶. Their newly announced "Action Plan 2025-2027" ⁷⁷ aims to establish systems for the online publication of local legislation, transparency programs, budgets, and financial reports, allowing citizens full access to public information as well as participatory budgeting where citizens are directly involved in identifying investment priorities and allocating local funds.

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⁷⁶ *Gender Responsive Budgeting in the Municipality of Elbasan - Watchdog Report*, Women Forum Elbasan, 2020-2021. https://www.gadc.org.al/media/files/upload/Watchdog%20report_WFE.pdf

⁷⁷ Action plan – Elbasan, Albania, 2025 – 2027, Open Government Partnership, July 2025. <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/action-plan-elbasan-albania-2025-2027/>

⁷⁸ Construction of the local traditional Roma craft market in Gjirokastra, EU4Municipalities, 2025. <https://eu4municipalities.al/en/gjirokastra-municipality/>

⁷⁹ *Roundtable on funding mechanisms and financial support for the visual arts in Albania*. United Nations Association Albania, March 2024. <https://arca.al/en/articles/roundtable-on-funding-mechanisms-and-finacial-support-for-the-visual-a/>

position and the strategy until now has been more focused on buildings and the restoration of cultural institutions, but now this focus will change. The need to create operational support schemes for art and culture organizations was emphasized during the roundtable and the Deputy Minister said that the idea of creating 3-year support schemes for organizations stabilized in the cultural ecosystem is being considered, adding "The budget is insufficient to cover all the needs related to the development of activities, festivals, films - documentaries, etc." ⁸⁰.

In 2025 Albania's government announced a €8.8 million investment in the AI startup Machine Thinking Lab, founded by Albanian AI expert, ex-OpenAI CTO, Mira Murati⁸¹. This decision marked the first revision of the state budget for 2025, with a fund of 1,000 million lek being taken from Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation, in the form of a capital transfer to the Albanian Investment Corporation, for the purpose of the participation of the Albanian government, represented by the Albanian Investment Corporation, in the startup "Thinking Machines Lab" NORMATIVE ACT No. 6, dated 11.6.2025 ON SOME AMENDMENTS AND SUPPLEMENTATIONS TO LAW NO. 115/2024, "ON THE 2025 BUDGET", AMENDED⁸².

More information on State Budget for Culture can be found in the following sources by the Ministry of Finance:

<https://financa.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Buxheti-per-Qytetaret-Ministria-e-Financave-2025.pdf>

<https://financa.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Tabela-1-Buxheti-2025-institucionet-me-programe-dhe-shpenzimet-e-tjera-1.xls>

<https://financa.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Tabela-1-Buxheti-2025-institucionet-me-programe-dhe-shpenzimet-e-tjera-1.xls>

<https://financa.gov.al/buxheti-fillestar-2005/>

https://meki.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/raporti-i-monitorimit-4m_2025.pdf

⁸⁰ The poor funds of the Ministry of Culture, visual art in Albania have received only crumbs, Citizens, Elira Kadriu, March 2024

https://citizens.al/en/2024/03/29/fondet-e-mjera-te-ministrise-se-kultures-arti-pamor-ne-shqiperi-ka-marre-vetem-therrime/#google_vignette

⁸¹ Albania enters global AI market; Government invest 10 million in Machine Thinking Lab led by Albanian-American Mira Murati, RTSH, 2025. <https://rtsh.al/rti/en/albania-enters-global-ai-market-government-invests-10-million-in-machine-thinking-lab-led-by-albanian-american-mira-murati/>

⁸² Ministry of Finance, Akti Normative Nr. 6, June 11, 2025. <https://financa.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Akti-NORMATIV-NR.6-DATE-11.06.2025.pdf>

5.3. Public cultural expenditure per sector

Table 3: Public cultural expenditure*: by sector, in national currency and in EUR, YEAR

Source: This data is not sortable in this format. Full 2025 State Budget here: <https://financa.gov.al/projektbuxheti-2025/>

6. Legislation on Culture

6.1 Overview national cultural legislation

New Laws and amendments:

- Law No. 124/2024 on personal data protection, was published in the Official Gazette on January 17, 2025. It aims to align Albania's data protection framework with the European Union's GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation).⁸³
- Amendments in 2023 to Law No. 97/2013 on Albania's Audiovisual Media Law to align with the EU's Audiovisual Media Services Directive 2018/1808. (to include video-sharing platforms, to increase transparency of media ownership, to protect fundamental rights (especially for children), to enhance accessibility for people with disabilities and to strengthen the Audiovisual Media Authority's (AMA) role in regulation and compliance with the law.

6.2 Overview international cultural legislation

New developments:

- 21 July 2025, Albania recognizes the Toast Ritual as of National Heritage Value
- February 2025 Albania ratified the Council of Europe Convention on Offenses relating to Cultural Property (Nicosia Convention)
- September 2024 Albania signed the 2019 Hague Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Judgments in Civil or Commercial Matters, which will enter in force on 1 March 2026. It can impact the enforcement of cultural property judgments.
- Albania has not signed the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

⁸³ Decision, The Toast Ritual is Recognized as National Heritage Value (Vendim, Rituali i Dollise njihet si Vlerë Kombëtare e Trashigimisë), Monitor.al, 21 July 2025, <https://monitor.al/vendimi-rituali-i-dollise-njihet-si-vlere-kombetare-e-trashegimise>

(Only 25 of 46 Council of Europe member countries have signed it.) Albanian Law Nr. 96/2017⁸⁴ stipulates a threshold of 20% presence in a municipality to create the conditions for language relations between the minority group and the local government bodies. Also, the bylaw relating to data

- collection which sets out the regulations for formally identifying persons belonging to national minorities has still not been adopted.⁸⁵
- 2024 the Albanian K'cemi⁸⁶ dance was inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.
- 2023 Transhumance⁸⁷ Albania was included as part of a joint file on UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, referring to the seasonal movement of people with their livestock between geographical or climatic regions. In 2022 Albanian Xhubleta⁸⁸, a handcrafted garment worn by highland women and girls in Northern Albania was inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

⁸⁴ Law nr.96/2017 On the Protection of National Minorities in the Republic of Albania: <https://rm.coe.int/law-on-protection-of-national-minorities-in-albania-english/1680a0c256>

⁸⁵ Fifth Opinion on Albania, ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE FRAMEWORK CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION OF NATIONAL MINORITIES
<https://rm.coe.int/5th-op-albania-en/1680acf90e>

⁸⁶ K'cimi Dance of Tropoje: <https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/k-cimi-dancing-of-tropoje-01881>

⁸⁷ Transhumance, the seasonal droving of livestock, Nomination file No. 01964, ICH UNESCO, Inscribed in 2023
<https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/transhumance-the-seasonal-droving-of-livestock-01964>

⁸⁸ Xhubleta, skills, craftsmanship and forms of usage, Nomination file No. 01880, ICH UNESCO, Inscribed in 2022
<https://ich.unesco.org/en/USL/xhubleta-skills-craftsmanship-and-forms-of-usage-01880>