

## ARMENIA

### Short cultural policy profile

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#### **1. Facts and figures**

##### ***Political system***

Since independence from Soviet Union in 1991, Armenia has implemented several systems of political governance (in 1991, 1995, 2005 and 2015 respectively). Until 2015 Armenia had been a presidential republic, however since the new constitution was accepted in 2015, it became a parliamentary democracy with a single chamber parliament (National Assembly), elected through a proportional representation system. The formal head of the country is still a president, elected by the National Assembly for a term of seven years, but practically the country is governed by a prime-minister with enlarged functions and power.

##### ***Official language(s)***

The official national language is Armenian. Russian and English are widely used as languages of tourism, science and international relationships. The main minorities are Russian-molokans, Yezidis and Assyrians, who speak correspondingly Russian, Kurmanji and Assyrian. The law on language was accepted in 1993 with some amendments made in 2011. Its states that “the Republic of Armenia on its territory shall guarantee the free usage of languages of national minorities” and “In communities of national minorities in the Republic of Armenia the general education may be organised in their native language”.

	<b>2020</b>	<b>2016</b>
<i>Population on 1 January</i>	<b>2 963 251</b>	<b>2 998 557</b>
<i>GDP in million USD</i>	<b>12 645</b>	<b>10 546</b>
<i>GDP per capita in PPS Index (EU27_2020 = 100)</i>	<b>102</b>	<b>100</b>
<i>General government expenditure (in % of GDP)</i>	<b>23</b>	N/A
<i>Public cultural expenditure in million EUR</i>	<b>42.77</b>	<b>41.39</b>
<i>Public cultural expenditure as % of GDP</i>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>0.5</b>
<i>Public cultural expenditure per Capita</i>	N/A	N/A
<i>Share of cultural employment of total employment</i>	<b>20.0</b>	<b>18.0</b>

Sources: <https://armstat.am>

## **2. Cultural policy system**

### **2.1 Objectives**

Cultural policy in Armenia was seriously changed after the Velvet revolution of 2018. The emergence of new political elites has strongly influenced new public perceptions of culture and the development of a new system of cultural policy and management. Significant transformations first started in the institutional sphere. In 2019, the government's new optimised organisational structure was introduced, where respective ministries of education and science, culture, sports and youth were reorganised into a Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports<sup>1</sup>. The newly created ministry defined its main functions as follows: "The Ministry ... is a central body of executive authority that elaborates and implements the policy of the Government of the Republic of Armenia in the spheres of education, science, culture and sport".<sup>2</sup> Such a transformation was ambiguously accepted by public circles and many critics emphasised that it would not be going to effectively resolve accumulated problems in the mentioned

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.arlis.am/documentview.aspx?docID=130615>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.am/en/structure/275/>

spheres, but would rather lead to more centralisation of power and, generally, wouldn't be effective in institutional and financial terms.<sup>3</sup>

The new Charter of the Ministry (2019) defines the goals, objectives, functions and methodologies of institutional and financial management of the Ministry.

The main goals and objectives of the cultural policy are:

- Enhancing intellectual, spiritual, creative and physical potential of the Armenian people
- Providing equal and open access to high quality education, cultural institutions and facilities, and sports for everyone independently of age, gender and physical abilities.
- Preservation, creation and promotion of national cultural heritage
- Raising new generations in accordance with patriotic and humanistic values.
- Providing equal facilities and opportunities for healthy physical and mental development of individuals and communities.
- Considering and developing education, science, culture and sports as the main factors for developing the economy, competitiveness, societal progress and security.

The ministry's general functions correspondingly lie in developing policies and programmes and bringing them into compliance with international conventions, norms and agreements; implementing programme and financial management, monitoring and evaluation of targeted programmes and projects; international cooperation; and mediation between private and public sectors.

The main substantial distinctions between the current policies and the previous ones may be formulated as: a) the integrative perception of culture as a compound of creative, value-generation/preservation, intellectual and physical development processes; b) the focus on accessibility of and targeted involvement in culture, education, creative activities and sports, for all social groups of the population, both individuals and communities.

In the new government programme developed immediately after the snap parliamentary elections of June 2021, which was recently (August 2021) accepted by the National Assembly, culture is not separately addressed, but is included in the general concept of "development of human potential".

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.e-draft.am/projects/1503/digest>

## **2.2 Main features**

### **Main concepts**

Article 6 of the *Law on the Principles of Cultural Legislation (2002)* defined culture as "a set of modes of activities, perceptions and thinking in the material and spiritual fields of society and their expression representing a stated value". Since 2009, another broader definition of culture included in the *Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity* has been introduced. It states that culture "should be regarded as the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of a society or social groups, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs". No other official definition or concept of culture has appeared since.

However, post-revolutionary authorities (the "Civil agreement" party) have presented several concepts of cultural development, which are reflected in their political programme of June 2021, for the next 5 years<sup>4</sup>. Briefly, these concepts include optimisation, technical, technological and substantial modernisation, community involvement, infrastructural development, diversity and creativity support, and heritage protection/preservation. In general, the main idea is that better access to culture and education, creativity and technological advancement lead to better economic, social and physical development and a more secure environment.

### **Main actors and financing models**

The main actors, i.e. policy makers and implementers in the sphere of culture and education may be divided into several groups, whose influence on the development and implementation of cultural policies is very different, but in some cases almost equally important. It should be noticed, that in recent years the collaboration between different public and private actors has been significantly enhanced.

1. Governmental actors  
Ministry, Government, National Assembly – definition of public concepts, development, financing and implementation of policies and programmes.
2. Non-governmental organisations (local NGOs, cultural and youth centres, etc.) – usually play the role of consultants and local implementers of cultural and educational programmes (such as recent professional re-training of

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<sup>4</sup> See the full program at: <https://www.civilcontract.am/hy/culture>

teachers). They are usually grant-receivers, but in exceptional cases can source crowdfunding for some projects through social media.

3. Cultural and educational institutions (schools, universities, theatres) – their influence is expressed through: 1) defining the main scope of creative activities, trends and topics; 2) critical discourse and opposition to governmental initiatives (there are numerous cases of sending back drafts of law for additional discussion and development and serious public confrontation between cultural institutions and ministry officials); 3) Professional consulting. They are partly financed by the state or public/private foundations and partly or fully self-financed (theatres, private schools, universities, etc.).
4. International public organisations like UNESCO, the Open Society Foundation, foreign political entities (embassies), etc. – help to regulate national policies in accordance with international conventions/law and provide funding for cultural and educational initiatives.
5. Private and public foundations, international and pan-Armenian (Gulbenkian foundation, Alex Manoogian Foundation, Jinishian foundation, etc.) – develop concepts/programmes for cultural and educational development and provide funding for their implementation. They usually collaborate with the government directly or through public educational/cultural institutions.
6. The mass media are exerting influence through media coverage of events, initiatives and concepts, public criticism and corresponding cultural/educational content in Armenian and other languages.
7. Private enterprises (like editing/printing houses, art and cultural shops and cafés, like Loft, etc.) – publish cultural/educational content, provide independent (including financial) support for the development of critical discourses on cultural/educational policies.
8. Different social and virtual platforms provide creative, discursive or critical content and occasionally source crowdfunding for specific cultural or education initiatives and events (e.g. “Boom TV”, Re-pat Armenia, etc.).

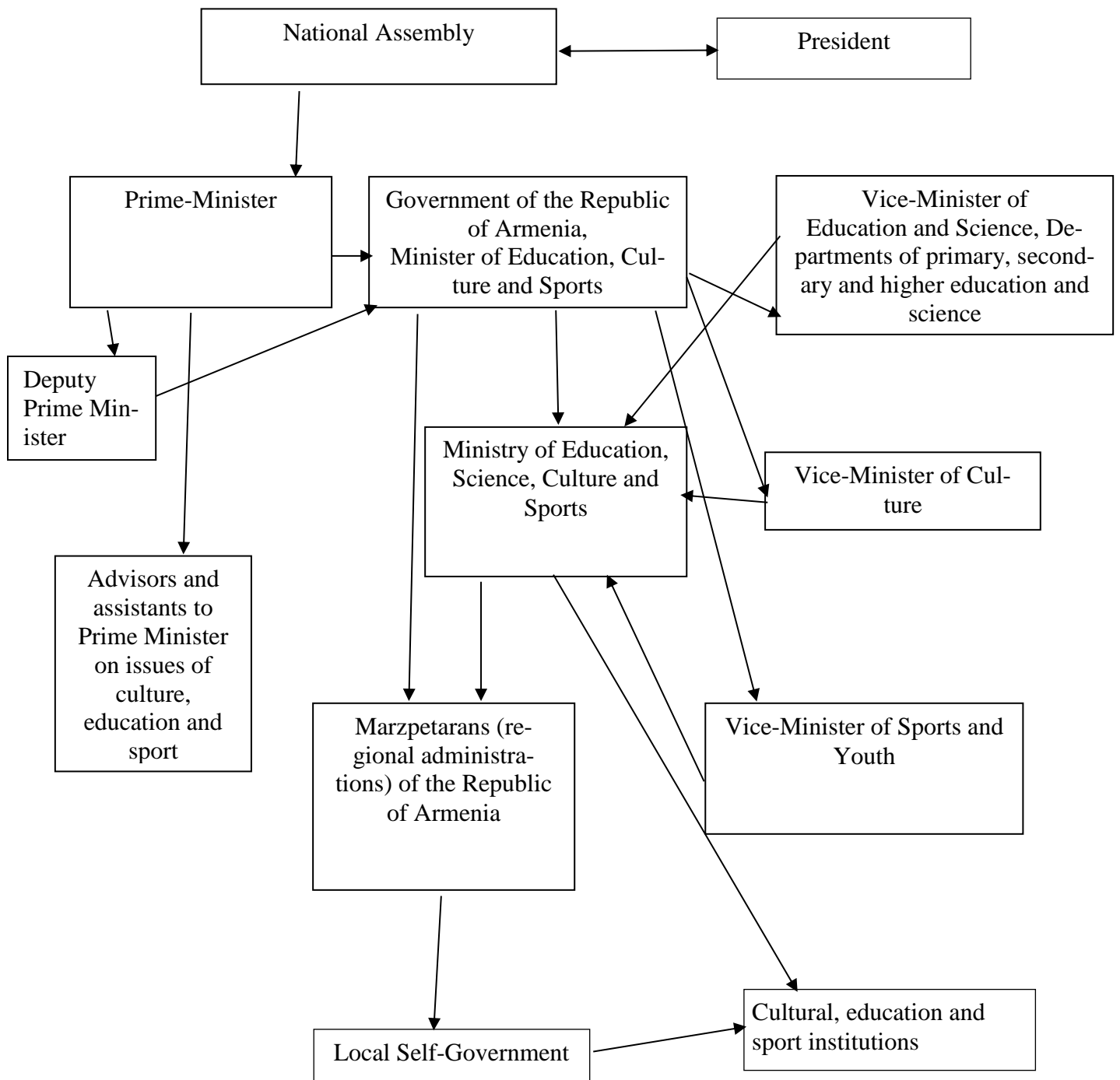
***Recent changes in the cultural policy system, their main reasons and motivations***

Pre-revolutionary cultural development policy<sup>5</sup> focused mostly on preservation of tangible and intangible cultural heritage, development of cultural infrastructures, international collaboration and considered public TV as a main tool for cultural promotion. Practically, that meant the allocation of money for different construction and reconstruction projects, and targeted funding for cultural actors, preferred by the government that contained a lot of corruption risks. The velvet revolution of 2018, aimed at annihilation of corruption and conducting the democratic/economic transformation of the country was a main reason for changing policies, including those related to culture and education. However, the speed and the complicated political agenda of revolutionary events did not give enough time and opportunity to fully develop profound and well-thought concepts and programmes, although their main principles were formulated as mentioned above. The COVID-19 pandemic and the Azerbaijani-Armenian war (2020) were other serious factors affecting the policy changes. For instance, the war and the Azerbaijani occupation of the Armenian-populated territories of Karabakh exacerbated the problem of protection and physical preservation of the Armenian cultural heritage, and the pandemic forced the government to resort to necessary reconsideration of its strategies and to place a stronger focus on creativity, infrastructural development and modern technologies.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://escs.am/files/files/2019-07-04/e3c0b7f3ce6e00f5a386a824e84f02d9.pdf>

**2.3 Governance system: Organisational Organigram**



## **2.4 Background**

During the last 70 years, Armenia has passed through a number of political regimes each imposing its own system of perception, management, implementation and control over culture.

### **1950-1991 – The Soviet regime**

The Soviet system of cultural policies and management was extremely politicised and ideologised. Education and culture were tightly controlled and orchestrated by party and government officials through a pyramidal system of power. In general, it can be characterised as a strongly "paternalistic" model according to Abraham Moles' definition<sup>6</sup>. All professionals of art, literature, music were registered as members of the so called "creative unions" that were managed and controlled by party officials. On the other hand, "bringing culture and education to the masses" was the main concept of the soviet cultural policy. Culture and education were perceived as the main and the most powerful tools of soviet propaganda since the first days of Soviet power. Armenia as an integrative part of the Soviet Union underwent all of the stages of cultural transformation with some local specifics. Firstly, infrastructural development was prioritised: thousands of schools, houses of culture, institutions of technical and higher education, art and music schools, theatres, cinema theatres, music halls, libraries and museums were built throughout the country. Most of educational institutions were free of charge and the charge for cultural events (concerts, performances, cinema, etc.) was minimal and accessible even to those with low incomes. Secondly, creative arts, literature and science was funded by the state only, in a centralised way, and the state officials (through membership in different committees and the censorship system) used to decide who/what deserved funding. Thirdly, special attention was paid to mass media and mass literature: thousands of books, news-papers and magazines in millions of printed copies were issued daily and disseminated through official (in some cases obligatory) subscription networks.<sup>7</sup>. All this ensured the process of active everyday consumption of highly regulated and controlled mass culture. At the same time, culture as a concept was very limited; it was understood as a scope of selected cultural heritage and creative activities as arts, literature, music, etc. implemented within the communist, socialist and atheist ideological frameworks. Cultural diversity was understood only as a variety of ethnographic

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<sup>6</sup> Moles, A. *Sotsiodinamika kul'tury* [Sociodynamics of culture]: Translated from French. B.V. Biryukov. 3rd edition. M.: LKI Publishing house, 2008.

<sup>7</sup> Khudaverdyan K. *Kul'turnaya revolyutsiya v Sovetskoy Armenii (1920-1940)*, Yerevan, 1969.



cultures: the population of all Soviet Republics was divided into the privileged “title” nations and the unprivileged “minorities”. Religion was excluded from the definition of culture. In terms of language, national history and cultural heritage, the Soviet authorities conducted the politics of standardisation, unification and Russification, although in some republics including Armenia these trends were less effective.

### **1991-2021 The post-Soviet developments**

During the first decades since independence, some Soviet perceptions and patterns of implementation and management of culture like the centralised pyramidal management, the predominantly state funding of education and cultural institutions, and the perception of education and culture as a tool for the ideological/political propaganda, etc., were preserved. However, the adoption of a market economy and the developing oligarchic system of political power appeared to be destructive for the Soviet cultural and educational infrastructures, especially in rural communities. Tens of schools, houses of culture, museums and theatres were privatised, sold, reconstructed and changed functions or even completely destroyed. Private and international funding reanimated the performing and creative arts, but could not recover the previous scale of consumption of cultural education and mass culture and the government programmes and strategies did not set such a goal.

## **3. Current cultural affairs**

### **3.1 Key developments**

During the three post-revolutionary years (2018-2021), which were aggravated by the war and the pandemic, the government and policy makers were busy with the following immediate tasks:

- Reorganisation and optimisation of the government structure, reconsideration of the main approaches to the management of education and culture, and development of draft laws for education and museums, which are currently in the process of discussion.
- The anti-corruption struggle and development of anti-corruption strategies.
- Reconsideration of funding concepts of infrastructures and activities.

The corrupt and monopolised economic and political system of the first three decades of independence used education and culture not only as an instrument of

influence and political manipulation, but also as a means of personal enrichment of its representatives through illegal alienation, privatisation and sale of cultural objects, infrastructures (buildings, spaces) and other properties (for example, the case of some historical buildings, illegally privatised by Minister Hasmik Hakobyan, etc.), the targeted annihilation of architectural heritage to free the space for private investments, etc. All this resulted in the decline of infrastructures, and the loss of a significant part of the cultural heritage.

In general, projects implemented by the government since 2018 fall into several conceptual clusters: availability and financial accessibility of education and culture; stronger state control over financial management; modernisation and optimisation of educational and cultural infrastructures. Thus, a number of projects in implementation are aimed at closer cooperation and symbiosis of education and culture: better access for school children to theatres, concert halls and museums through special projects of state financial coverage of a certain number of tickets per person each year for everyone<sup>8</sup>; state supported access for schoolchildren to selected art objects, artists, musicians, and writers<sup>9</sup>; etc. The main problem with those projects is lack of access to cultural institutions and activities for children from provinces, which is to be resolved at the local level. Another project on modernisation and restructuring of culture houses in the regions funded by a state foundation “My step” is aimed at the reanimation of cultural life in villages and small towns<sup>10</sup>. All those projects are supposed to change the situation on a short-term basis, until a new, well-grounded and long-term concept of development of education and culture is developed.

By analysing public discourse on governmental strategies, one may come to a conclusion about the following main challenges in the related spheres:

- Lack of professionals in the spheres of management of education and culture. Three ministers and even more vice-ministers have already replaced each other and each one of them became an object of severe public criticism. A significant number of employees occupied in the spheres of culture and education demonstrate a poor level of professionalism and motivation, are steeped in corruption and conflicts of interest, with no readiness to improve their performance.

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<sup>8</sup> See: <https://escs.am/am/news/5819> and <https://escs.am/am/news/5821>

<sup>9</sup> See: <https://escs.am/am/news/5820>

<sup>10</sup> See: <https://mystep.foundation/hy/our-work/188/>

- A very complicated and unhealthy legal, structural and infrastructural heritage in terms of corrupt networks, contradictory legislation, numerous serious violations and risks to be faced and losses to be restored, and investigations still to be conducted.
- The problematic political situation in Armenia, aggravated by the war and the pandemic. Due to serious political challenges currently experienced by the country, the local discourse in any field or sphere becomes highly politicised and is being immediately used for political manipulation.

In general, the government is accused of a lack of effort and measures to fight corruption, resumption of some previous methods of management and unprofessional approaches to reforms and transformations implemented. Thus, the new Law on Education which had been developing for two years, was recently sent to the Constitutional Court, which considered that it did not fully fit with constitutional statements. Some managerial solutions like a structural fusion of some theatres and systemic changes in the management of the Opera House were publicly criticised and even led to public scandals. At the same time, changes of managers, personnel, and a strategic development plan in some museums had a positive impact for the sphere.

### **3.2 Key themes**

While the re-elected government is busy with the development of concepts and programmes, many other local and diaspora players are sounding and formulating the main themes and discourses on education, science and culture:

- [https://www.culturalpolicies.net/wp-content/uploads/pdf\\_short/armenia/armenia\\_short.pdf](https://www.culturalpolicies.net/wp-content/uploads/pdf_short/armenia/armenia_short.pdf)The definition, historical legitimisation, monitoring and preservation/protection of the Armenian cultural heritage in Armenia and in (currently or recently) Armenian-populated territories. The improvement of local legislation and public control over possible violations in this sphere, the creation of international monitoring mechanisms (such as the already established joint Monument Watch Initiative). One of the most important topics is thought to be the representation of Armenian culture and its historical and geographic diversity around the world and the state supported protection and preservation of Armenian monuments and Armenian cultural heritage outside of Republic of Armenia.
- Modernisation and digitalisation of cultural and educational infrastructures. Digitalisation of the cultural processes and heritage. Creation of local and pan-

Armenian digital platforms for culture and education has become a very timely and acute problem in the period of the pandemic: thus, such platforms were created to provide virtual access to museums.<sup>11</sup>

- The relevance of organisational structures and methods of management, financing and control in the spheres of education and culture to modern trends and the market economy. Digital management of education and culture (e.g. different electronic methodologies of registration, accountability and data-gathering are currently being introduced into the state system of management). One of the most discussed issues is whether the Ministry of Culture as a separate entity is needed. Opponents think that the organisational fusion of education, science, culture and sports has not been justified. Sustainability of culture is another serious topic. The challenge is finding a good balance between state and private funding, which is a difficult issue in the case of such a small and scarcely populated country as Armenia and cultural tourism development may be a good solution.
- Measurability and efficiency of governmental reforms and programmes. Particular attention is paid to the development of different kinds of assessment and evaluation tools for programmes in culture and education. In 2021, a methodology of assessment and evaluation of effectiveness of the new education programme is being experimentally introduced in one of the remotest regions of Armenia. Its results will affect the general implementation of the methodology.
- Availability of culture in provinces and border villages/towns. Physical accessibility of cultural infrastructures and activities for people with disabilities. The problem is being exacerbated by the physical and psychological consequences of the Armenian-Azerbaijani war (2020). The government stated that post-war cultural politics should be aimed at the psychological recovery of Armenian society<sup>12</sup>. Currently a lot of special education and cultural programmes, both state and private, are being provided disabled soldiers.
- Development of creative industries in the context of development of spheres of small business enterprises and tourism. Some state programmes developed as measures to alleviate the consequences of the pandemic are particularly aimed at encouraging small creative industries.

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<sup>11</sup> <https://escs.am/am/static/museumfromhome?s=culture>

<sup>12</sup> <https://escs.am/am/news/8196>

- Integration and even structural fusion of education and culture. The main issue raised is how to motivate the younger generation to increase their active consumption of culture and how to make culture more available and accessible for the old generations. Life-long education as a topic has been recently introduced to the public discourse.
- More effective and competitive redistribution of the state finances into education and culture, development methods of active public monitoring and control, and elimination of corruption risks. This is a problem coming from the past, which is not fully resolved yet, although the situation is much better now.
- One of the themes that is not very often publicly discussed, but gets more and more audible, is the creation of possibilities in the cultural development and cultural identification for ethnic and religious minorities. On the legislative level, this issue is fully represented, but there is lack of financial opportunities to make long-term and bigger scale projects in this sphere. Partly, the issue is handled by the diaspora organisations of ethnic minorities (Assyrian, Molokan and Yezidi ones), or ecumenical organisations in the case of different religious minorities, or affluent individuals who want to contribute to some facilities or activities. All of the main ethnic minorities have their representatives in the National Assembly and, therefore, can promote discussion of their problems. In fact, favorable legislation, enough facilities for cultural self-expression and development, and a welcoming environment are the only factors that could attract minorities back from migration to other countries.
- More active participation of the Armenian Diaspora in Armenian policy making and cultural development is one of the more discussed issues. Recently, the number of diaspora-based or diaspora-related initiatives aimed at development of education, science and culture in Armenia has been increased. (e.g. such initiatives as “Future Armenian”, “Programme of retraining of Diaspora teachers”, “Pan-Armenian education committee”, etc.)

### **3.3 International Cultural Cooperation**

During thirty years of independence, Armenia has established cooperation with almost all important European, Eurasian and International players like EU, UNESCO, ICOM, WMF, BSI, INCP, CIS, etc., and accepted and ratified tens of international conventions in the sphere of culture. The international collaboration and cooperation have traditionally pursued the following goals:

- Political and normative integration through legislative compliance with international norms and agreements in the sphere of culture;
- Professional and institutional integration through different professional and institutional networks;
- Keeping up with the international trends and processes through professional improvement, individual development projects, professional consulting, etc.;
- Getting financial support from international grant making organisations and cultural grant programmes;
- Marketing and promotion of Armenian culture and cultural tourism.

Currently, most of these objectives have not changed. It may be added that Armenia is currently seeking a serious improvement of the country's image and international cooperation in the sphere of culture is seen as one of the tools to achieve this goal. That is why there is state support for different international cultural events, festivals, conferences, etc. However, there are some distinctions from the previous strategies. The post-war consequences made the government focus on targeted contacts and cooperation with UNESCO, WMF, BSI, European Association of Archeologists, ALIPH international alliance, etc. on the burning problem of rescuing and preservation of the Armenian cultural heritage on the territories under Azerbaijani control. The Armenian side is seeking support, international awareness on the problem and, possibly, international pressure placed on Azerbaijan, which has already distorted or destroyed a number of cultural and historical monuments.

Also, Armenia is deepening its international cultural and educational cooperation through the Armenian diaspora and the Diaspora organisations. The current programmes are aimed at creating pan-Armenian cultural, creative and educational networks and platforms<sup>13</sup>, as well as providing better involvement in the Armenian development processes by some foreign educational and cultural institutions through Armenians working there.

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<sup>13</sup> <https://escs.am/am/news/6649>

## 4. Cultural Institutions

### 4.1 Overview

Since Soviet times, Armenia has inherited the large network of public institutions (schools, universities, houses of culture, art and music schools, libraries, theatres, cinema theatres, museums, and art galleries) and a widely shared perception that education and culture should be orchestrated, managed and financially covered primarily by the state.

However, since as early as the 1990-ies, a number of NGOs and private organisations acting in the sphere of education and culture have significantly increased<sup>14</sup>. Their activities in very rare cases were compatible with the governmental strategies, only in those cases when they were founded by governmental officials or their relatives and received grants from the state to implement programmes to be delegated to the public/private sector. Today more than 50 organisations and private institutions are implementing state programmes in the sphere of culture<sup>15</sup>. However, they have not played any serious role in the policy making process, with minor exceptions, like the YFA (Youth for Achievement) case (2010-2012), when its members participated in the international “Black Sea Cultural Animation” programme and could make some input to the state strategy development.<sup>16</sup>

Some profit-making prospects also stirred up the process of emerging private institutions such as art/dance/music schools, private museums/galleries and, quite recently, private theatres. Their number increased as the effectiveness and quality of state institutions declined. For instance, currently there are about 120 private museums/galleries, but only 50 of them are registered in the list of cultural institutions of the Ministry of ESCS.<sup>17</sup> However, their influence on policy making is becoming more and more important. Thus, the law on museums has been discussed since 2011, but has not been finally shaped, because it does not appropriately address private museums and galleries and does not fully reflect their problems and interests.

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<sup>14</sup> The current number of registered NGOs in Armenia is 5408, foundations – 1418, and community enterprises 1449, see: <https://www.moj.am/legal/view/article/1420/>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.govtravel.am>

<sup>16</sup> <http://kasa.am/hy/>, <https://www.culturepartnership.eu/am/article/creative-industries-study-for-armenia>

<sup>17</sup> <https://escs.am/am/static/museums?s=culture>

## 4.2 Data on selected public and private cultural institutions

Table 1: Cultural institutions, by sector and domain

Domain	Cultural institution (sub-domain)	Public sector		Private sector	
		Number (2020)	Number (2016)	Number (2020)	Number (2016)
<b>Cultural heritage</b>	Cultural heritage sites (recognised)	<b>24 221</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Archaeological sites	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Museums</b>	Museum institutions	<b>100</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Archives</b>	Archive institutions	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Visual arts</b>	Public art galleries / exhibition halls	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Performing arts</b>	Scenic and stable theatre spaces	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Concert houses	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Theatre companies	<b>26</b>	N/A	N/A	<b>28</b>
	Dance and ballet companies	<b>1</b>	N/A	N/A	<b>1</b>
	Symphonic orchestras	<b>3</b>	N/A	N/A	<b>3</b>
<b>Libraries</b>	Libraries	<b>637</b>	N/A	N/A	<b>798</b>
<b>Audiovisual</b>	Cinemas	<b>5</b>	N/A	N/A	<b>5</b>
	Broadcasting organisations	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Interdisciplinary</b>	Socio-cultural centres / cultural houses	N/A	N/A	N/A	<b>854</b>

Sources: [https://armstat.am/file/article/sv\\_03\\_19a\\_570.pdf](https://armstat.am/file/article/sv_03_19a_570.pdf); <https://escs.am/files/files/2019-08-29/09516fb1822e75b13128e1afe5299b7f.pdf>; <https://armstat.am/file/doc/99520898.pdf?fbclid=IwAR1d--c1-MO9oh0zycfdqhlDCEJcOr4EflZm85-9pJTKDMn141qdP0orP2U>



## 5. Cultural Funding

### 5.1 Overview

The cultural sphere in Armenia is financed predominantly by the state budget. This financing approach provides relative stability and sustainability to the cultural institutions and corresponds to the “state as architect” model of cultural policy outlined by McCaughey and Chartrand. Public funding is allocated to different branches of culture and education according to priorities developed by the Ministry and approved by the government. Thus, in 2019 the following priorities were identified:

- support to the cinematography sphere;
- preservation, replenishment and promotion of the cultural heritage;
- creation of necessary conditions for development of literature, theatre, music and creative arts;
- development of children’s artistic capacities;
- reanimation of the cultural life in provinces;
- programme of preservation, replenishment and regular use of state archives.

All of those priority spheres are supposed to get gradually increasing funding through the years of 2019-2023. For instance, it was supposed to allocate for the cinematography sphere 714.1 million AMD in 2021; 842 million AMD in 2022) and 842 million AMD in 2023. The programme of renovation and modernisation of libraries has been allocated 1 691.1 million AMD in 2021, 1 775.7 million AMD in 2022 and 1 775.7 million AMD in 2023.

The recent circumstances of the war and the pandemic definitely affected the previous financing plans. For instance, in some spheres funding allocated for 2020 was more than for 2021. In 2020 cinematography was supposed to receive 842 million AMD, which is more than the figure for 2021 with 128.0 million AMD. In the sphere of cultural heritage we see the opposite picture: 2 982.5 million AMD is being allocated in 2021, in comparison to 2 951.7 million AMD in 2020. This may be a consequence of the Armenian-Azerbaijani war, which endangered much of the Armenian cultural heritage. Currently, along with the the process of the adoption of a new state development programme, a new financial plan is going to be developed as well.

However, in the last couple of years one may notice some changes in the financial policies, aimed at increasing non-governmental sources of funding for culture.

More governmental programmes tend to be based on collaboration of public and private sectors. The “Ararat” brandy factory and the “Beeline” mobile connection company sponsor various cultural events (concerts, exhibitions, festivals) and are good examples of such collaboration. Thus, more local and international organisations and foundations explicitly express their interest in providing grants for cultural institutions and programmes. The private sector also seem inclined to make investments in the cultural sphere, especially in connection with tourism developemnt initiatives (e.g. by sponsoring art, culinary, ethnic culture, wine festivals, etc.) One may observe cases of crowdfunding for cultural events and enterprises, which are becoming common(e.g. “301 publishing house” cultural enterprise, which is created by crowdfunding mechanisms). Although, in order to bring more private funding into the cultural sphere, some serious structural and legislative changes are needed. Cultural business is a sphere which still needs more attention and more development in Armenia. Unfortunately, there are no recent surveys about the trends of private funding of culture in Armenia yet, perhaps because of the turbulent political situation and constant structural changes during the last three years.

## 5.2 Public cultural expenditure by level of government

**Table 2: Public cultural expenditure by level of government, in national currency and in EUR, 2020 and 2016**

<b>Level of government</b>	<b>Total cultural expenditure 2020</b>			<b>Total cultural expenditure 2016</b>		
	<b>in million AMD</b>	<b>in million EUR</b>	<b>% share of total</b>	<b>in million AMD</b>	<b>in million EUR*</b>	<b>% share of total</b>
<b>State (central, federal)</b>	24 380.0	42.77	2.1	23 590.0	41.39	2.0

Source: <https://armstat.am>

\* At the date of expenditure

### 5.3 Public cultural expenditure per sector

**Table 3: Public cultural expenditure: by sector, in national currency and in EUR, 2020 and 2016**

Field / Domain	Public cultural expenditure 2020			Public cultural expenditure 2016		
	in million AMD	in million EUR*	% share of total	in million AMD	in million EUR*	% share of total
Cultural Heritage	2 982.53	5.23	1.67	395.35	0.69	3.75
Museums	2 683.86	4.71	1.51	1 441.35	2.53	13.67
Archives	590.17	1.03	0.33	N/A	N/A	N/A
Visual arts/ performing arts	8 738.05	15.33	4.91	5 103.03	8.95	48.4
Audiovisual and Multimedia	N/A	N/A	N/A	119.87	0.21	1.13
Interdisciplinary Socioculture Cultural Rel. Abroad Cultural Education	608.06	1.07	0.34	710.06	1.24	6.7
Collaboration with Diaspora	1 085.04	1.90	0.61	N/A	N/A	N/A
Budget of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports	177 648.93	311.66	100%	105 426.12	184.96	100%

Source: <https://escs.am/am/news/7693>

\* 1EUR=570 AMD

## 6. Legislation on culture

### 6.1 Overview national cultural legislation

Legislation on Culture in Armenia generally supports basic democratic values and freedoms. The most important legal document stating cultural rights, responsibilities and freedoms of the citizens of Armenia is the Constitution of the Republic in Armenia (first accepted in 1995, then reconsidered, changed or amended in 2005, 2015, and 2020). In several principal articles it states the basic rights and freedoms related to the sphere of culture, education and science. In particular, the state promotes the development of culture, education and science and protects the Armenian language (the state language according to Article 20) and cultural heritage (Article 15); the freedom of activities of religious organisations is guaranteed and religion is separated from the state (Article 17); everyone has the right to education and secondary education is free for everyone (Article 38); everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion (Article 41), freedom of expression of opinion (Article 42), and freedom of literary, artistic, scientific and technical creation (article 43). Besides the main legislative document of the country, there are a number of laws, legislative and normative acts regulating the sphere of culture and education. One of the most important is the law on the principles of cultural legislation and policies (2002, with amendments of 2011, 2018). It states the basic principles, goals, objectives, fields of application of cultural policies, citizens' basic rights and freedoms in the sphere of culture, and forms and mechanisms of financing culture and cultural activities. According to the Law, the main objectives of the cultural policy are: to help society realise that culture is a driver of development; to create opportunities for the development of new ideas and new cultural values/goods; the development of society's creative potential; and to support the formation of a civil society.

There are other important laws regulating specific spheres of culture and cultural activities such as the Law on Education (1999); on Preservation of Intangible Heritage (2009); on Libraries and Librarian Activities (2012); on Language (year?); on Cultural Monuments and Material Heritage (2003); on NGOs (2016); on Export and Import of Cultural goods/property (2004); on Preservation of Monuments and Historical Heritage (1998); on Creative Activities and Creative Unions (2005); on Television and Radio (2010), etc. In 2019 the development of the new Law on Education and Science was started. A lot of state and non-governmental organisations, education entities and independent experts were largely involved in the process

of discussion on draft statements of the law. After two years of discussion and two drafts, the law was recently accepted by the National Assembly (2021). However, after a while, due to some political clashes and controversies, it was sent to the Constitutional Court because of a couple of controversial articles relating to the principles of governance of universities and the academic sphere. The Constitutional Court found that some of the articles are contradictory to the Constitution and sent the law back for improvements. Since 2018, no other significant law was developed, and only a few amendments to the existing laws were made.

## **6.2 Overview international cultural legislation**

The legislative field of the RA is strongly influenced by cooperation with international structures and organisations. Armenia became a member of the UN in 1992 and thus laid the foundations for international cooperation, in particular, in the sphere of legislation. Armenia joined a number of important conventions and declarations with UNESCO, the Council of Europe, CIS Cultural Cooperation Council, the EU, and other organisations. Some laws in the cultural sphere were developed after Armenia joined the corresponding conventions, such as those on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit *Import, Export* and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property(1970); on Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972), on the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003), etc (more than 8 conventions and declarations). On the whole, Armenia is very responsive to its international commitments and has no precedents with not ratifying any of the conventions signed.

After the Velvet revolution (2018) and the Azerbaijani-Armenian war (2020) the main trends in international cultural and legal cooperation include the concepts of peace and peaceful coexistence at the regional level, integration with the international cultural processes, reconsideration and renovation of liaisons and cooperation with the Diaspora, and positioning Armenia as a country which is fully compliant with the principles and values of peace, security, tolerance and collaboration.