

## Belgium – Flanders

### Short cultural policy profile

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#### 1. Facts and figures

**Political system:** *Federal parliamentary constitutional monarchy*

**Official language(s):** *Dutch, French, and German*

	<b>2018</b>	<b>2013</b>
<i>Population on January 1st</i>	<b>11 398 589</b>	<b>11 137 974</b>
<i>GDP in million EUR</i>	<b>460 029</b>	<b>392 880</b>
<i>GDP per capita in PPS Index (EU27_2020 = 100)</i>	<b>EUR 118</b>	<b>EUR 121</b>
<i>General government expenditure (in % of GDP)</i>	<b>52.2%</b>	<b>56.1%</b>
<i>Public cultural expenditure in EUR</i>	<b>3 239 300 000</b>	<b>2 902 100 000</b>
<i>Public cultural expenditure as % of GDP</i>	<b>0.7%</b>	<b>0.7%</b>
<i>Public cultural expenditure per Capita in EUR</i>	<b>284</b>	<b>261</b>
<i>Share of cultural employment of total employment</i>	<b>4.3%</b>	<b>3.8%</b>

**Note:** *the figures above refer to the totals of all levels of government in Belgium*

**Sources:** *Eurostat and National Bank of Belgium*

## 2. Cultural policy system

### 2.1 Objectives

Belgium is a federal country. Cultural affairs are mainly the subject of policies on the level of the Flemish, French, and German-speaking Communities. This refers to areas such as arts, heritage, language, media, youth policy, and sports. Tourism and immovable heritage are competences of the Regions (Flemish, Walloon, and Brussels-Capital Region). A number of (large) cultural institutions still fall under the responsibility of the Federal State.

Principles of political and cultural democracy and references to human rights pervade the history of cultural policies in Belgium and its Communities. Many actions conducted in the framework of these policies are in line with the principles of the Council of Europe, on the promotion of cultural diversity and cultural participation, respect for freedom of expression and association, and support for creativity. (Belgium played an active role in the history of the Council.)

Another important principle underpinning a large deal of cultural policies in Belgium and its Communities is subsidiarity. This means that the government does not directly intervene in cultural matters, other than by means of general regulations and support measures.

### 2.2 Main features

This profile primarily provides information on the cultural policies of the Flemish Community of Belgium. These policies apply to people and organisations living and working in Flanders and Brussels. The focus is placed on policies subsumed under the Flemish policy in the field of Culture. Strictly speaking, this spans arts, heritage, socio-cultural work, circus, amateur arts, sign language, and policies that permeate these different fields. Matters such as media, sports, and youth form separate policy fields. Some information on culture-related affairs may also be found in other related policy fields of the Flemish government, under the Federal State, or under lower government levels.

In general, cultural policy in the Flemish Community is based on the following values:

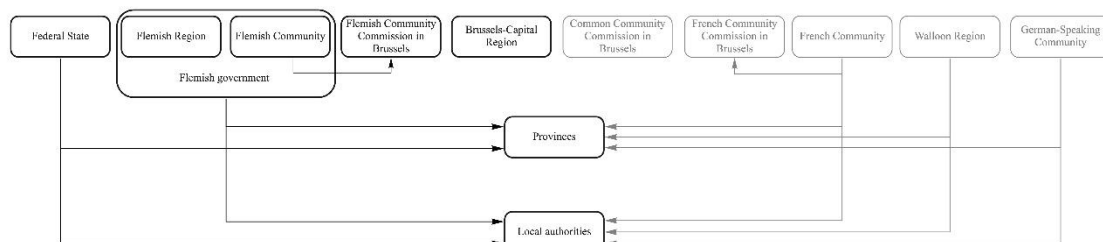
- equal rights for all its inhabitants
- quality and diversity of the cultural offer (and taking measures to correct market distortions)
- cultural democracy and cultural participation
- cultural competences
- creativity
- protection and promotion of cultural heritage

Responsibilities of the Flemish authorities with regard to the competence of Culture are:

- developing a strategic conceptual framework for cultural policies
- providing a set of policy instruments
- taking measures to increase the quality of the cultural offer and provision of cultural services
- monitoring (the effects of) these policy frameworks and instruments

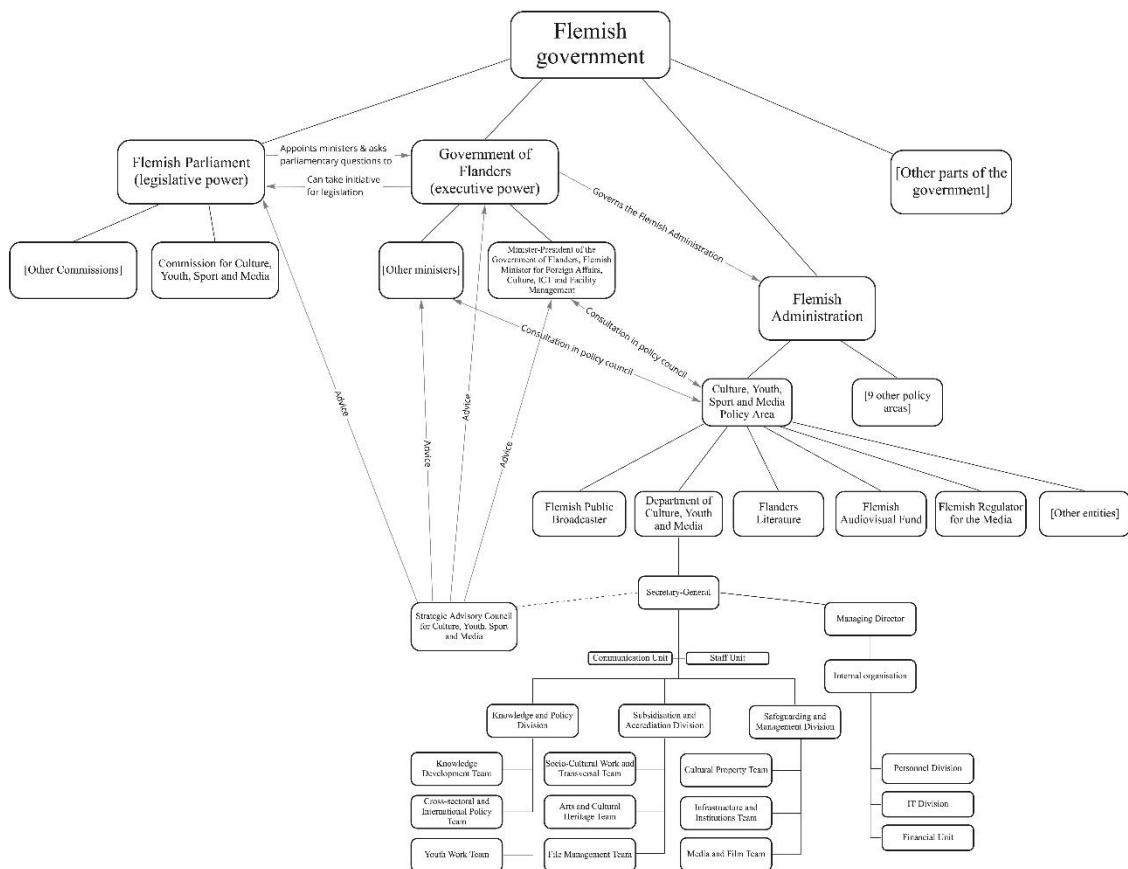
### 2.3 Governance system: Organisational Organigram

#### Higher and lower levels of government in Belgium



Update: September 2020

## Organigram of the Flemish government



Update: October 2021

## 2.4 Background

- 1944-1970: After the Second World War, cultural policies in Belgium expanded and were shaped by a drive to democratize culture — inspired by principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In line with international developments, cultural policies developed as an alternative to both the state culture of Communist countries and the market-governed system of the United States. These developments converged with the way Belgian society was historically shaped by philosophical and political divisions (the so-called 'zuilen', literally 'pillars'), leading to the subsidiary government intervention in cultural affairs.
- 1970-1980: The autonomy of the linguistic communities, vis-à-vis the Federal State, was further institutionalised. Through subsequent State Reforms, cultural policy was divided over the newly created government levels. In the wake of these reforms, the Culture Pact was passed. Throughout this decade, the ministers of Dutch Culture (as it was called) were Christian-Democrats, whose policies were geared towards

democratizing culture (a network of culture centres and libraries was built throughout Flanders). In 1980, the Flemish and Walloon Regions were created (the Brussels-Capital Region followed in 1989).

- 1981-1992: In the wake of economic turmoil, overall government expenditure on Culture decreased. A new, rather management-oriented style of cultural policies – which included encouraging cultural organisations to generate a private income – was introduced by Liberal ministers of Culture in the Flemish government.
- 1992-1999: Christian-Democrat ministers of Culture continued the line of their liberal predecessors and focussed on the traditional arts and on socio-cultural work. Legislation on performing arts, music, and museums in Flanders and Brussels was passed that provided funding for delineated periods of time and which allowed funded players to devise longer-term planning.
- 1999-2009: Flemish government budgets for Culture increased considerably. Legal frameworks were streamlined and ‘integrated’ policies were created for the professional arts (the Arts Decree, which replaced discipline-specific regulations), cultural heritage (the Cultural Heritage Decree), and socio-cultural work (the Decree Socio-Cultural Work for Adults). The Funds for literature and for audiovisual production were also established in this period, as well as the Participation Decree.
- 2009-2021: Budgets for Culture came under pressure. The number and scope of new policy initiatives on the Flemish level were rather limited compared to the preceding decade — with the exception of the temporary support measures with regard to the COVID-19 crisis in 2020-2021. As result of a reform of government levels and their remits in Flanders, local cultural policy was decentralised and provincial authorities were largely divested of their cultural competences. In the wake of these reforms, a new Decree on Supralocal Cultural Activities was established.

### **3. Current cultural affairs**

#### **3.1 Key developments**

A number of challenges have been the subject of debates in and on the cultural field in Flanders and Brussels in the past years. The COVID-19 crisis has been a

major driver in reinvigorating some of these debates, such as the socio-economic position of artists and cultural workers, inequalities (with regard to gender, cultural background, (dis)ability, etc.) in the access to culture and to the cultural labour force, questions of funding for arts and culture, the impact of digitization on the workings of the sector, and ecological sustainability. Internationalisation was added to the agenda, as a significant part of the arts field in Flanders and Brussels relies on international activities, networks and revenues and the impact of restrictions on mobility that came with the crisis is still being felt.

The mentioned topics receive different rates and ways of attention in the different parts of the cultural and creative sectors. Sometimes they are even seen as conflicting with one another, as is the case with ecological concerns and the craving for a revived international mobility. The broader questions sparked by the COVID-19 crisis and other events resonating throughout Belgian society (the severe flooding in the summer of 2021, cases of police brutality, awareness about the history of colonial repression and its repercussions, lawsuits on cases of sexual harassment and gender-based violence — to name a few) is whether cultural workers and organisations should go back to business as usual and – if the answer is no — how to achieve that transition in a just and fair way.

These challenges have also met varying interest of policy makers. In the wake of the turmoil of COVID-19, politicians on the Flemish, Federal, and local level have expressed their concern about the position of artists and cultural workers and the financial situation of cultural organisations. The crisis also coaxed coalitions of artists and cultural workers into working more together to get their voice more effectively heard by the different levels of government. This resulted in a series of temporary support measures on all these levels aimed at mitigating the effects of the crisis. In the longer term, the Flemish policies on support for the arts were reconfigured (see 3.2), the Federal government set up a trajectory to reform the social status of the artist (see 6. 1), and some local authorities (especially in the larger cities) have reallocated budgets for new support schemes for artists and cultural organisations.

COVID-19 also functioned as a catalyst for policy measures on digitization. In line with the priorities of the EU Recovery and Resilience Facility, these constitute one of the focal points of the recovery plan of the Flemish government (*Vlaamse Veerkracht*). A strategic vision on digitization in the cultural field was prepared and a trajectory was launched for developing standards for horizontal exchange,

operationalisation and re-use of data on cultural activities, players, artefacts, etc. in and from Flanders.

Further discussion on these and other topics of debate in the cultural field (up until 2020) can be found in section 2 of the full profile of Flanders, Belgium.

### **3.2 Key themes**

The arts field has taken up several of the challenges mentioned in 3.1, in actions that frequently arise under the theme of 'fair practices'. These include charters, labour agreements, and awareness-raising and advocacy initiatives that aim to foster sustainable relationships between artists and organisations. They do this by drawing attention to and creating conditions for fair pay, safe and decent working conditions, transparency, shared responsibilities, and solidarity. Recent examples include the fair practice charter *Juist is Juist*, the artist movement against sexism and power abuse *Engagement*, the development of a model agreement for proper remuneration of visual artists, or the social media campaign *#Fairpayvoorartiesten*, which pleads for better protection of copyright and related rights of artists whose work is available through streaming services. The latter is a case in point of how the call for fair practices intertwines with other developments, such as the impact of booming digital service providers on the creative value chains.

There are signals that awareness in the arts field is indeed increasing on aspects of fair practices. Moreover, implementing them has become an integral part of (binding) labour agreements between unions and employer associations in the arts in Flanders and Brussels. Nonetheless, the concrete impact and progress on diminishing inequalities and socio-economical injustices remains a subject of future assessment.

Cultural policy documents of recent years show support for fair practices. However, policy makers focus on outlining specific support actions (e.g. the Action Plan against harassment and abuse in the cultural field and media of 2018-2021) rather than specific rules on how to implement these. A case in point is the Arts Decree, which lists "correct remuneration for artists" and "attention for the principles of fair practices" as criteria for assessing funding applications. But it does not stipulate a clear definition of either criteria. Instead, the codes and charters used in the sector are referred to as guiding the implementation.

The Arts Decree was modified in 2021, as part of series of re-evaluations of culture decrees (see 6.1), under current minister Jan Jambon (2019-2024). In its different versions, the Arts Decree offers a relatively open framework for supporting the professional arts, through both short-term project funding and grants and multi-year subsidies. Applications go through a process in which their (artistic) quality is assessed by peers. Although the Decree stipulates a number of criteria which are to be taken into consideration while evaluating applications (see above, for example), these criteria remain flexible in their specific interpretation and contain few quantitative or output-related requirements. This offers opportunities for a diverse range of artistic initiatives and allows (in theory) room for innovation.

Though there was concern in the sector about the reform, the open and flexible framework of the Arts decree remains largely intact. However, the impact of notable changes is still to be assessed as new application rounds for funding are taking place at the time of writing and the total available government budgets are yet to be decided upon. One important novelty is the introduction of procedures that allow for assessing ratios in the budgets for qualified applications with regard to features deemed relevant (such as disciplines and types of artistic work, the location or scale of the applicants, core themes of the Minister, etc.). A stable part of the available arts budget will be dedicated to project funding and artist grants (hitherto, expenditure on short-term support fluctuated strongly per year). Other changes include a prohibition on combining project funding with multi-year funding, the introduction of a new type of longer-term multi-year subsidies, and the reintroduction of subsidies for international presentation projects.

The latter examples mark a subtle change. Recipients of the new type of long-term funding will need to sign management agreements with the Flemish government, which includes the possibility of getting specific assignments. In granting the renewed international projects, applications will be reviewed with regard to their contribution to the priorities in the international policies of the Flemish government (see 3.3). Though the framework for funding the arts is still largely tailored to the artistic needs and visions of the field, these new procedures point towards a more direct relationship between funded art organisations and the government.



### **3.3 International Cultural Cooperation**

Both the Federal State and the Communities and Regions have competences in foreign relations. The latter can devise policies on foreign affairs, but only with regard to their own competences. This means the Flemish government can sign agreements with (foreign) regions and countries other than Belgium.

Flemish policy instruments for international cultural cooperation come in two types. A significant part of these instruments are governed by the principle of 'follow the actor'. Here, players from the cultural field take the initiative for establishing and maintaining transnational connections, supported at arm's length through funding by the Department of Culture, Youth, and Media, by Flanders Investment & Trade, by other agencies of the Flemish government, or by autonomous public funding bodies. These support measures are either specifically geared towards international mobility and cooperation or are generically aimed at supporting cultural projects and organisations in their workings (which can involve international activities). This exchange is in part facilitated by international network organisations in arts and culture — some of which have their main seat in Belgium. Complementary to these networks, Flemish centres of expertise such as Flanders Arts Institute, VI.BE, FARO, Socius, and Circuscentrum play an active role in establishing relations between cultural professionals beyond borders.

A second type consists of funding schemes in which the goals and geographical reach of projects are more strictly defined and fit into specific government strategies. The Flanders Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) provides support for cultural projects that share the interests of the government or that help to foster relations with other regions and countries. FDFA also acts as a bridge between the cultural field and the network of General Representatives of the Government of Flanders. This network consists of fourteen diplomatic representatives in other countries or in international bodies. Part of their job is to enhance the international visibility and reputation of Flanders through the arts and heritage sector. The General Representatives can support cultural partnerships and events involving cultural players from Flanders and abroad. Bi-lateral collaboration agreements between Flanders and other regions or countries can also result in specific support measures for cultural collaboration, which are managed by the Department of Culture, Youth, and Media.

Internationalisation in culture is a priority for Jan Jambon (2019-2024), who is minister of both Culture and Foreign Affairs in the Government of Flanders. The focus of efforts in this term is placed on countries around the North Sea and in the historical region of the Hanseatic League.

Cultural diplomacy initiatives are also undertaken on the Federal level, especially by the cultural institution BOZAR. Also, as Belgium is a member of the EU, cultural organisations and professionals from Flanders and Brussels frequently participate in support schemes such as Creative Europe, Erasmus+, or Interreg.

## **4. Cultural Institutions**

### **4.1 Overview**

Flanders has been described as a cultural ‘nebular city’, a sprawl of predominantly small to mid-large cultural infrastructure and organisations of private and public origin. The distinction between both is not always clear, as some public organisations are former private initiatives and private organisations may have received some form of public support at some point in their history. The Flemish Arts Decree, for example, provides a relatively flexible framework that allows organisations with a predominantly private income to apply for public funding. Next to this public-private interplay, the interplay between the Flemish, provincial, and local government levels has been a historical driver in constituting the multifaceted cultural field in Flanders.

These interplays are reflected in table 1, which represents the cultural institutions that receive funding from the Flemish Community (through the Arts Decree, the Cultural Heritage Decree, the decree on Socio-Cultural Work for Adults, and legislation on Media and through the funds for audiovisual production and literature) and from the local governments (these include public libraries and local cultural centres). Immovable heritage sites are also mentioned, but these are regulated by legislation pertaining to the Regions. The Federal Government is the main funding body for a number of cultural institutions (among them the National Orchestra and Opera House and some large museums and archives, most of them located in Brussels). These are also listed in table 1. Provincial governments in Flanders are now largely divested of their cultural competences.

## 4.2 Data on selected public and private cultural institutions

Table 1: Cultural institutions, by sector and domain

<i>Domain</i>	<i>Cultural institutions (subdomains)</i>	<i>Public sector</i>	<i>Private sector</i>
		<i>Number (year)</i>	<i>Number (year)</i>
<b>Cultural heritage sites</b>	Immovable heritage sites (protected) in Flemish Region (excluding protected archaeological sites)	13 725 (2020)	/
	Archaeological sites (protected) in Flemish Region	46 (2020)	/
<b>Museums</b>	Museum institutions structurally funded through Cultural Heritage Decree	45 (2020)	/
<b>Archives</b>	Archive institutions structurally funded through Cultural Heritage Decree	9 (2020)	/
<b>Visual arts</b>	(Audio)visual arts organisations structurally funded through Arts Decree	25 (2020)	/
<b>Performing arts</b>	Performing arts organisations (theatre, dance, musical theatre) structurally funded through Arts Decree	70 (2020)	/
	Music organisations (classical music, jazz, folk, pop and rock) structurally funded through Arts Decree	59 (2020)	/
<b>Libraries</b>	Public libraries	314 (2015)	/
<b>Audiovisual</b>	Cinemas in Flemish and Brussels-Capital Regions	/	43 (2018)
	Flemish public broadcasting organisation (VRT)	1 (2020)	/

	Regional television broadcasting organisations	10 (2020)	/
	Flemish private television broadcasting organisations	/	16 (2020)
	Flemish private radio broadcasting organisations	/	3 (2020)
	Network radio broadcasting organisations	/	61 (2020)
	Local radio broadcasting organisations	/	236 (2020)
<b>Interdisciplinary</b>	Transdisciplinary organisations structurally funded through Arts Decree	8 (2020)	/
	Multidisciplinary organisations structurally funded through Arts Decree	39 (2020)	/
<b>Other</b>	Architecture and design organisations structurally funded through Arts Decree	7 (2020)	/
	Art Institutions ('Kunstinstellingen') funded through Arts Decree	7 (2020)	/
	Organisations structurally funded through Cultural Heritage Decree, other than museums and archive institutions	41 (2020)	/
	Organisations structurally funded through the Decree on Socio-Cultural Work for Adults	126 (2019)	/
	Local culture centres	69 (2015)	/
	Literary organisations receiving multi-year funding through Flanders Literature	5 (2020)	/

	Federal Scientific Institutions	10 (2020)	/
	Federal Cultural Institutions	3 (2020)	/
	Federally funded Bi-Community cultural organisations and activities	9 (2020)	/

**Sources:** *Department of Culture, Youth and Media of the Flemish government, Flanders Heritage, Flanders Literature, Flemish Regulator for the Media, and Statbel.*

## 5. Cultural Funding

### 5.1 Overview

A great deal of cultural policy of the Flemish Community consists of general regulations and arm's length support measures (see 2.1). This results in a diverse range of public funding instruments, regulated by decrees (see 6.1) or special funding bodies (such as the Funds for Literature and for Audiovisual Production). A diverse range of organisations and individuals (such as artists or craftspeople) can apply. A significant part of these are non-governmental organisations of either public or private origin and with a mixed public-private income structure (see 4.1 and 4.2). Depending on the type of policy instrument, subsidies are available for either non-profit or profit cultural activities.

In table 2 you will see a drop in the share of culture in the total expenditure of the Flemish government (from 3.3% in 2013 to 2.1% in 2018). This is mainly a result of the sixth State Reform, in which the Communities and Regions took over competencies from the Federal level (none of them directly related to culture). Total expenditure by Communities and Regions rose in 2015, causing a relatively smaller share of expenditure on culture.

Table 3 zooms in on the partition of the cultural expenditure of the Flemish government in 2019. It follows Flemish government budgets, which apply a different categorization than the international standards used in table 2. In table 3, 'culture' therefore excludes expenses on matters such as media and immovable heritage, which fall under different areas of competence. Taking the ten-year period before 2019 into account, cultural expenditure fluctuated between EUR 447 million (2016) and EUR 542 million (2018). Throughout this decade, these budgets were subject to subsequent cuts (see 2.4). Their impact is not necessarily

readily visible in the (total) expenditure figures, as these cuts affected parts of the culture budget in a different way. Within the arts, for example, we see a steady increase over the years in the budget for large art institutions. The budget cuts of 2020 in arts funding are not yet reflected in the figures in tables 2 and 3.

The Federal Government provides funding to a limited range of (large scale) cultural institutions and culture-related activities. As described in section 4.1, lower government levels were and are an important provider of public funding for culture. Since 2016, local governments in Flanders have been granted a great deal of freedom in how they devise their cultural expenditure. Since 2018, the provincial governments no longer hold cultural competences, except for a small number of related matters, such as immovable heritage (see 2.4 and 6.1). In table 2, the cultural expenditure of both local and provincial governments is subsumed under the moniker of lower government levels – which also comprise the local and provincial governments in the Brussels-Capital and Walloon Regions.

Despite enduring political interest in private funding for culture, reports (in [2015](#) and [2017](#)) have stated that there is no widespread ‘culture’ of private financing of the sector in Flanders. Surveys on charity in the whole of Belgium (in [2017](#) and [2020](#)) show that cultural goals represent about 10 to 12% of individual donations. A [study](#) on data from 2018 finds that around 19% of corporate giving by small- to large-scale companies in Belgium is aimed at culture. These figures do not comprise sponsorship of culture, on which few data are available. Next to these companies, there are many philanthropic foundations active in Belgium. Prominent foundations and corporate giving programmes for culture include the King Baudouin Foundation, SPES, CERA, the National Lottery, and Sabam for Culture.

In both the current (2019-2024) and previous term (2014-2019), the Flemish government has taken measures aimed at stimulating private financing of culture. One very recent example is the reduced tax rates in the Flemish Region on donations and on bequeathing inheritances to charities. Tax incentives related to culture also exist on the federal level, most notably the tax shelters for companies investing in audiovisual and performing arts productions.

## 5.2 Public cultural expenditure by level of government

**Table 2: Public cultural expenditure by level of government, in EUR, 2018 and 2013**

Level of government	Total cultural expenditure in 2018		Total cultural expenditure in 2013	
	In EUR*	% share of total	In EUR*	% share of total
<b>Flemish government</b>	1 124 900 000	2.1	1 237 500 000	3.3
<b>Federal Government</b>	195 800 000	0.2	94 300 000	0.1
<b>French Community</b>	664 200 000	3.3	560 100 000	3.8
<b>German Speaking Community</b>	14 400 000	3.6	7 900 000	2.4
<b>Walloon Region</b>	42 700 000	0.3	48 300 000	0.5
<b>Brussels-Capital Region</b>	34 700 000	0.6	15 400 000	0.4
<b>French Community Commission in Brussels</b>	13 100 000	2.6	7 000 000	1.7
<b>Flemish Community Commission in Brussels</b>	39 500 000	19.1	3 740 000	24.6
<b>All lower government levels</b>	1 248 100 000	3.9	1 103 400 000	3.8
<b>Total of all government levels in Belgium</b>	3 239 300 000	1.4	2 902 100 000	1.3

*Source: National Bank of Belgium (2020).*

*Note: \* At the date of expenditure.*

### 5.3 Public cultural expenditure per sector

**Table 3: Public cultural expenditure of the Flemish government: by sector, in EUR, 2019**

Field/Domain/Sub-domain	TOTAL		
	In EUR		in %
<b>Cultural Heritage</b>	64 369 000		12.6
<b>Arts</b>	190 162 000		37.3
<i>Flanders Literature</i>		6 663 000	
<i>Flemish Audiovisual Fund (Film Fund)</i>		17 845 000	
<i>Other (funding for arts organisations, project funding, other)</i>		165 654 000	
<b>Socio-cultural work for adults</b>	69 251 000		13.6
<b>Interdisciplinary</b>	158 604 000		31.1
<b>Administration</b>	27 852 000		5.5
<b>Total for area of competence of culture</b>	<b>510 238 000</b>		<b>100</b>

*Sources: Department of Finance and Budget & Department of Culture, Youth and Media of the Flemish government.*

## 6. Legislation on culture

### 6.1 Overview of national cultural legislation

The Belgian Constitution determines cultural affairs as competences of the (Flemish, French, and German-speaking) Communities, as well as cultural cooperation between the Communities and international cooperation on cultural affairs. This is the result of successive State Reforms since the 1970s (see 2.4). The latest state reform (2012-2014) has enabled the government of the Brussels-Capital Region to develop policies on particular cultural affairs on its territory (even though it is not a Community government).



Legislation of the Flemish Community is codified into ‘decrees’. Flemish decrees on cultural matters either apply to specific sectors or have a scope that spans the entire cultural field (or even other policy fields). Examples of the former are the Arts Decree (which arranges support for the professional arts), the Cultural Heritage Decree (which applies to movable and immaterial cultural heritage), the Circus Decree, the Decree on Amateur Arts, and the Decree on Socio-cultural Work for Adults. Examples of the latter type are the Decree on Supralocal Cultural Activities and the Participation Decree (which applies to the policy fields of Culture, Youth, and Sport). The current Minister of Culture Jan Jambon (2019-2024) announced at the beginning of his term that the decrees on professional arts, cultural heritage, socio-cultural work for adults, and participation would be re-evaluated and modified. In 2021, the Arts Decree underwent changes (see 3.2). These changes and older modifications to these cultural decrees are in part also aimed at streamlining procedures and terminology.

An ‘Internal State Reform’ of the Flemish government changed the modalities of funding for local authorities with regard to culture and divested the provincial authorities in Flanders of a great deal of their culture-related competences (2016-2018). These provincial competences were bequeathed to either the local level or the Flemish government.

Certain legislation on the federal level has an important impact on cultural affairs in the Communities. This includes the Culture Pact, which regulates the allocation of public funding for culture. Federal legislation on social security contains exceptions for artists that receive unemployment benefits. This framework is referred to as the ‘social status of the artist’. At the time of writing, a proposal for reform of this framework is being prepared by the Federal Government.

## **6.2 Overview international cultural legislation**

Belgium is a member state of the EU, Council of Europe, UN, UNESCO, and the OECD. The Flemish government is also involved in these intergovernmental bodies, either through independent relations (see 3.3), or through the Belgian membership (which requires coordination with the other government levels involved). This involvement includes implementing and monitoring treaties and policies, financial support for the workings of these bodies, and participation in working groups or conferences.

The following selection comprises culture-related treaties that were adopted by the Belgian State and that particularly apply to Flemish policies. The years between brackets refer to their date of adoption:

- UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1983)
- Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (1993)
- UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1994)
- Council of Europe Convention on Cinematographic Co-production (2003)
- UNESCO 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2006)
- UNESCO 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (2009)
- UNESCO Second Protocol to the Hague Convention of 1954 for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (2010)
- UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage (2010)
- Council of Europe European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (revised) (2010)
- UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2011)
- UN Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (2011)
- Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (2012)
- Council of Europe Convention on Cinematographic Co-production (revised) (2018)

This list is not exhaustive: EU-directives that affect relevant federal legislation are not included. With regard to the latter, we could mention the 2019 directive on Copyright, which was implemented through federal law in 2021.