



**Short Profile**

**January 2026**

**Bosnia and Herzegovina**

**Short Cultural Policy Profile**

**Author: Jasmina Husanović**

## 1. Facts and Figures

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) is a complex, multi-level state with a political and administrative structure composed of two entities – the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH) and Republika Srpska (RS) – as well as the self-governing condominium Brčko District.

### Political system

Bosnia and Herzegovina is a decentralised parliamentary republic with a highly fragmented constitutional architecture. Executive authority is divided between the state, entity, cantonal (only in the FBiH, which has ten cantons), and municipal levels.

### Official languages

The official languages of Bosnia and Herzegovina are Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian. The official alphabets are Latin and Cyrillic.

### Socio-economic context and cultural indicators

**Table 1.**

Indicator	2024	2019
Population on 1 January 2025	3,417,089	3,492,018
GDP (million EUR)	26,195	18,297
GDP per capita in PPS Index (EU27_2020 = 100)	32	35
General government expenditure (% of GDP)	45.7%	40.1%
Public cultural expenditure (million EUR)	70.26	90.51
Public cultural expenditure (% of GDP)	0.27%	0.49%
Public cultural expenditure per capita (EUR)	20.56	25.92
Share of cultural employment of total employment (%)	1.78%	2%

Sources: Eurostat, Central Bank of BiH, the Agency for Statistics of BiH, Ministry of Civil Affairs of BiH, UNESCO, and the author's own calculations based on various reports from these sources, as well as from different levels of governance in charge of public funding for culture, as available.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Eurostat: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat>; Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina: <https://bhas.gov.ba>; Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina: <http://www.mcp.gov.ba>; Central Bank of Bosnia and Herzegovina: <https://www.cbbh.ba>; UNESCO Institute for Statistics: <http://uis.unesco.org>.

Bosnia and Herzegovina's cultural sector faces significant structural challenges that are rooted in its post-Dayton political framework. With a GDP per capita below the EU average, public spending capacity remains limited, resulting in low cultural investment and a heavy reliance on public institutions. This fiscal constraint is compounded by a highly decentralized governance model; cultural competences are fragmented across Republika Srpska, the Brčko District, and the ten cantons of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. While the state-level Ministry of Civil Affairs coordinates international strategies, the lack of a unified policy centre hinders strategic development. Ultimately, critics argue that the primary obstacle is not just financial, but a failure to recognize culture as a strategic public good or an integrative societal resource.

## 2. Cultural Policy System

### ***2.1 Objectives***

The scope of cultural policy in Bosnia and Herzegovina is shaped by a post-war governance structure characterised by extreme fragmentation and decentralisation. Culture is not an exclusive competency of the state; instead, it is primarily regulated and financed at the entity, cantonal, and local levels. This dispersal across multiple administrative layers results in the absence of a unified policy centre, leading to weak coordination and significant territorial disparities in cultural provision.

Consequently, the main cultural policy objectives are not defined in a single, formally adopted national document. Instead, objectives emerge from a plurality of legal acts and administrative practices. Currently, the framework is primarily understood as a domain oriented toward the preservation of cultural heritage, the support of public cultural institutions, and the safeguarding of ethnonational identities. The emphasis remains strongly institutional, focusing on maintaining existing infrastructure rather than fostering systemic innovation, audience development, or cultural entrepreneurship. This has often reduced culture to a symbolic guardian of identity or a mere expenditure-based sector, rather than recognising it as an integrative force for social cohesion or sustainable development.

Regarding how these objectives have changed in recent years, the discourse has begun to shift through international alignment. As a signatory to the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, BiH has formally adopted a broader definition of cultural policy that encompasses the creation, production, and dissemination of cultural expressions. Furthermore, objectives are increasingly influenced by European integration processes and alignment with EU and Council of Europe norms. This shift has introduced concepts such as cultural rights, intercultural dialogue, and cultural diversity into the official discourse. However, while these modern objectives are increasingly visible in international cooperation projects, their practical implementation remains uneven and they have yet to be fully integrated into domestic policy instruments, which still prioritise administrative regulation over long-term strategic planning.

## **2.2 Main Features**

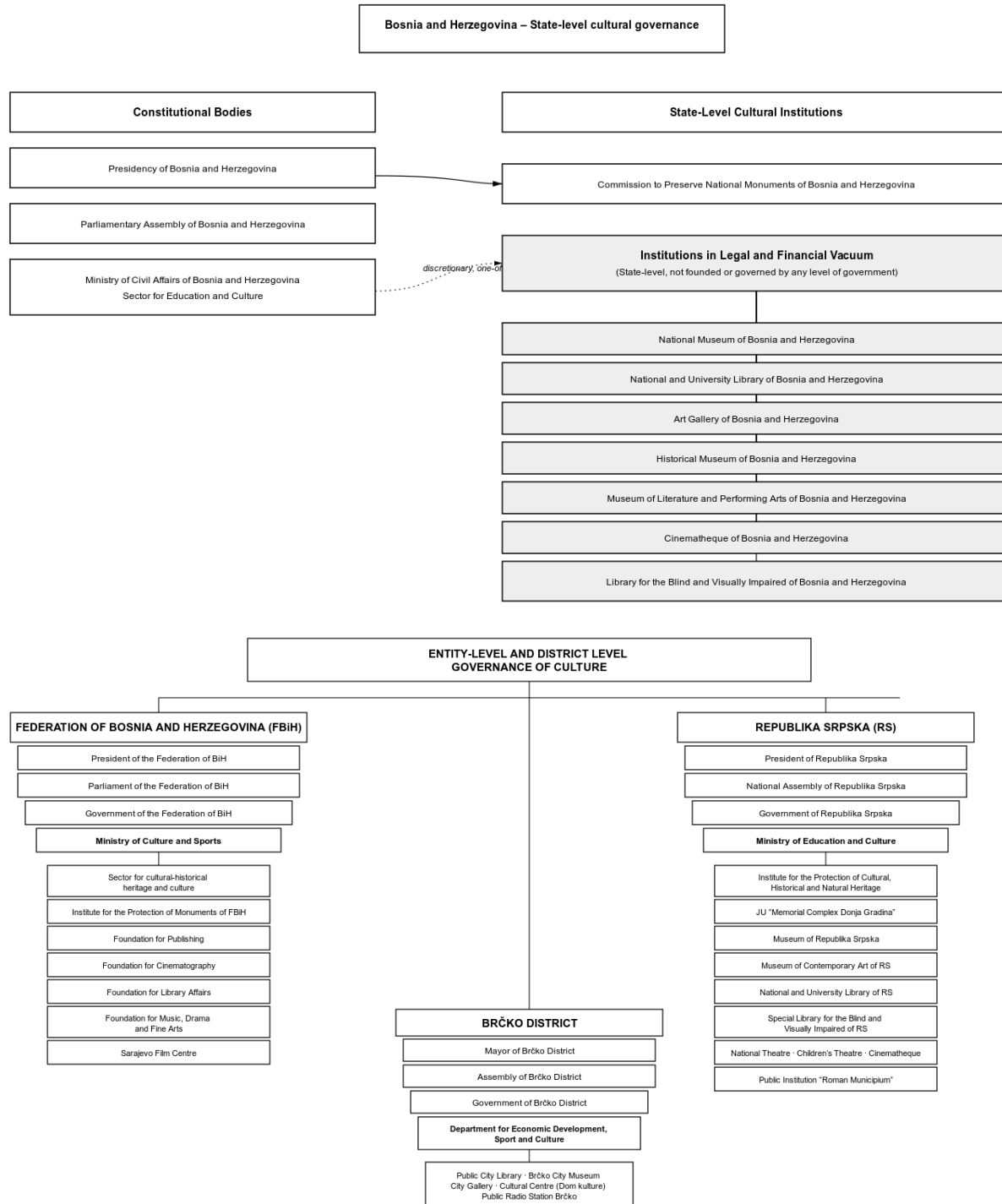
The cultural policy system in Bosnia and Herzegovina is fundamentally defined by extreme decentralisation and institutional fragmentation. A core feature of this framework is the absence of a ministry of culture at the state level, which prevents the formation of a unified policy centre. Instead, cultural competencies are distributed across a multi-layered administrative hierarchy. At the entity level, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska regulate culture through their respective ministries. Within the Federation, cantonal governments hold significant authority over the establishment and financing of institutions, while municipalities sustain local cultural centres and libraries.

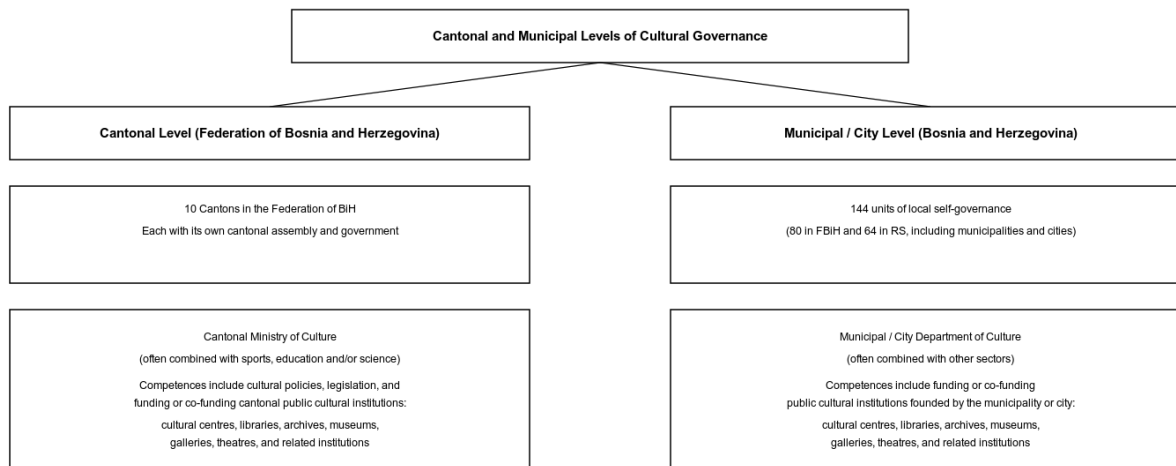
This governance structure results in multiple parallel systems operating within a single state. While this allows for local autonomy, it also produces overlapping responsibilities and significant regional inequalities. The financing model is overwhelmingly institutional, with budgets primarily allocated by entity and cantonal authorities to cover salaries, operational costs, and the maintenance of heritage institutes. This rigid focus on "institutional preservation" leaves limited room for innovation. Consequently, a dual system has emerged: public institutions rely on stable but politicized administrative budgets, while independent cultural actors are forced to depend on international donors and EU-funded programmes for survival.

In terms of governance models, the country exhibits a limited application of the arm's-length principle. Decision-making authority over funding and appointments remains firmly within political-administrative structures, which often leads to the politicisation of culture and constrained professional autonomy. Recent developments show modest shifts toward greater alignment with European norms, particularly in international cooperation and heritage protection. However, these changes are more transactional than structural. The system remains deeply decentralised, not out of an entrepreneurial drive, but due to a post-war political strategy. State-level actors often avoid supporting institutions of national relevance to resist acknowledging a shared cultural space or integrative state functions.

Ultimately, this fragmentation has actively undermined the development of a coherent civil cultural sector. Neither domestic institutions nor international actors have succeeded in integrating independent initiatives into long-term governance frameworks. The system's failure to evolve into a more entrepreneurial or interventionist model is rooted in administrative inefficiency and a lack of political will to treat culture as a transformative public domain rather than a tool for ethnic or administrative compartmentalization.

## 2.3 Governance System: Organisational Organigrams





## 2.4 Background

The historical trajectory of cultural policy in Bosnia and Herzegovina is inextricably linked to the region's broader political and socio-economic shifts. Over the last seven decades, the system has moved from a centralised socialist framework to a highly fragmented, post-conflict, neoliberal and ethnonational structure.

**1950s-1960s:** Cultural policy was embedded within the socialist Yugoslav model, characterised by strong public investment, institutional expansion, and the conceptualisation of culture as a primary tool for broader social development.

**1970s-1980s:** Decentralisation increased during this period, allowing for greater autonomy for cultural institutions and a growing emphasis on self-management, while public funding for the arts and heritage remained notably stable.

**1990s:** The 1992–1995 war, often characterised as culturicide, caused extensive destruction of cultural infrastructure and resources. Consequently, post-war reconstruction efforts were compelled to prioritise emergency preservation over the development of policy.

**2000s:** The post-Dayton period institutionalised fragmentation. Cultural policy became dispersed across multiple governance levels, which led to a landscape defined by limited coordination and a lack of strategic planning.

**2010s–2020s:** European integration processes introduced new discourses on cultural rights, diversity, and international cooperation. Despite these external influences and new frameworks, structural reform of the domestic cultural system remains limited.

The governance of these institutions continues to rely on organisational and management models that have not substantially adapted to post-war social and political change. Because decision-making authority remains closely linked to political-administrative structures, professional autonomy and

strategic planning are significantly constrained. This combination of institutional rigidity and a limited capacity for reform has reduced the responsiveness of cultural institutions to contemporary social needs and emerging practices.

### 3. Current Cultural Affairs

#### ***3.1 Key Developments***

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the development of new cultural policy priorities is primarily challenged by a complex combination of institutional inertia, structural fragmentation, and the absence of a unified national policy framework. Policymakers must navigate a system where cultural activity is sustained through a precarious balance of public institutions, local initiatives, and a resilient independent scene. A central challenge is the "duality" of the sector, which limits innovation and undermines long-term sustainability. On one hand, public institutions are primarily sustained through administrative continuity, acting as custodians of heritage with limited capacity for innovation due to financial and administrative constraints. On the other hand, independent cultural production remains project-based and structurally vulnerable. This imbalance creates a situation where the sector is stuck in a cycle of maintaining the status quo rather than pursuing strategic investment or structural reform. Furthermore, the professional status of cultural workers presents a significant hurdle, as employment is split between relatively secure positions in public institutions and highly precarious, project-based work for freelancers and younger workers. This divide negatively impacts generational renewal and artistic risk-taking.

Despite these significant structural constraints, there have been key achievements, most notably the stabilisation of the public cultural sector. While there has not been a major expansion, the number of institutions and employees has remained stable, indicating that the sector has managed to avoid further contraction. Additionally, the independent cultural sector has achieved remarkable international visibility and has become a key site for experimentation, contemporary arts, and youth-oriented programmes. However, the achievement of these independent actors is tempered by the fact that their sustainability is fragile. Because domestic public funding mechanisms rarely provide stable or multi-annual support, these organizations rely heavily on project-based funding from international donors and EU programmes. This has led to a structural dependency where international strategies, rather than domestic policy, often shape the cultural agendas and working conditions within the country.

The issues of structural weakness and the role of international donors have been the subject of critical analyses and public discourse, particularly regarding the post-war period. It is argued that the international support of the late 1990s and early 2000s created a parallel cultural system that remained disconnected from domestic policy structures. As international funding declined after 2000, the absence of sustained public support led to the disappearance of many initiatives, revealing a lack of long-term institutional anchoring. Furthermore, the discourse around digitalization has intensified,

especially in the context of the COVID-19 recovery period. While some institutions have introduced digital catalogues and virtual events, the lack of coordinated policy support and specialized skills means that systemic digital transformation remains more aspirational than a reality. These debates highlight a clear need for a move away from short-term external interventions toward a more integrated and systemic domestic policy that can support the evolving needs of both public and independent cultural actors.

### ***3.2 Key Themes***

Contemporary cultural debates and practices in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) are shaped by the tension between internal socio-political fragmentation and external policy influences. The following themes summarise the primary challenges and dynamics within the sector.

#### **Cultural Heritage and Memory**

Cultural heritage remains a vital yet strained component of BiH's cultural landscape. While institutions like museums and archives are essential for preserving heritage damaged during the 1990s conflict, they operate under severe financial pressure. Furthermore, heritage narratives are frequently politicized, forcing institutions to navigate contested interpretations of history and identity within a fragmented political environment.

#### **Cultural Diversity and Pluralism**

Although diversity is a cornerstone of the BiH constitution, it is rarely translated into an integrative policy. Official discourse frequently invokes pluralism, yet practical measures for intercultural dialogue remain limited. Instead, policy arrangements often reproduce ethnically segmented cultural spheres, reinforcing parallel publics rather than fostering shared spaces for reconciliation.

#### **Social Cohesion, Internationalisation, and Project-based Culture**

While culture has the potential to support reconciliation and social cohesion, this remains underutilized without explicit policy links to social development. While there is a potential for EU programmes like Creative Europe to expand international networks, they are underused and often reinforce a project-oriented logic that prioritizes short-term outputs over the long-term development of domestic institutions.

#### **Seven National Cultural Institutions in a Vacuum**

A critical milestone of instability is the legal limbo of seven national institutions—including the National Museum and the National and University Library. Since the Dayton Agreement, their founding status was never transferred to the state level. Consequently, they lack a permanent state budget and rely on precarious, temporary grants. This vacuum endangers the country's most significant historical treasures and hinders basic operations like payroll and archival maintenance.

#### **Cultural Rights and Access**



Access to culture is characterized by a sharp urban-rural divide. While urban centres host a concentration of programmes, rural and marginalized areas suffer from limited provision. Cultural rights have gained visibility through international conventions, but domestic policy has failed to link cultural access with social integration, education, or youth engagement to counter social fragmentation.

### **Civil Society and Cultural Participation**

The independent cultural scene, though innovative, faces structural obstacles. It remains fragmented and largely excluded from decision-making. The prevalence of short-term, project-based funding and a lack of institutional trust limit the sector's capacity to advocate for structural reform, keeping its impact confined to the programme level rather than governance transformation.

### **Gender, Precarity, and Labour Inequalities**

Gender disparities persist in leadership roles and the distribution of precarious labour. Cultural employment is marked by insecurity and limited mobility, particularly affecting younger professionals. Existing policy frameworks fail to address these human resource challenges, which undermines the sector's capacity for generational renewal and long-term planning.

### **Intersectoral Development and Sustainability**

There is a growing recognition of the need to embed culture within broader frameworks like tourism, education, and the environment. Without intersectoral integration and coherent, value-driven policies, culture remains isolated from key societal processes, limiting its contribution to employment and long-term development.

## ***3.3. International Cultural Cooperation***

International cultural cooperation is perhaps the most dynamic and complex segment of the cultural sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Through active engagement with global frameworks such as UNESCO, the Council of Europe, and various EU programmes, the country has aligned its domestic discourse and legislation with international standards. This alignment provides a vital platform for heritage protection and intercultural dialogue that might otherwise lack a formal framework.

However, this relationship functions as both a critical opportunity and a significant structural dependency. Because domestic funding is often rigid or insufficient, international funding frequently steps in to compensate for domestic policy failures. While this prevents the total stagnation of the sector, it simultaneously allows structural deficiencies to persist without political accountability at the national level.

A clear example of this is seen in the challenges surrounding EU programmes like Creative Europe. Bosnia and Herzegovina remains notably underrepresented, with many actors failing to participate due to internal structural impediments. These include a lack of state-level coordination, limited administrative capacity within smaller organizations to handle complex application processes, and the absence of systemic co-financing mechanisms at the domestic level. Furthermore, the requirement for

organizations to adhere to various taxes and align with local financial rules that clash with EU grant rules, creates an additional financial barrier. Consequently, while these programmes expand international networks, they often reinforce a project-oriented logic. This logic prioritizes short-term, visible outputs over the essential, long-term development of domestic institutions, further distancing the independent scene from a sustainable, state-supported cultural infrastructure.

## 4. Cultural Institutions

### ***4.1 Overview***

The institutional landscape of culture in Bosnia and Herzegovina is a direct reflection of its decentralized governance and post-conflict legacy. Predominantly publicly owned and funded, cultural institutions operate under entity, cantonal, or municipal authorities. A defining characteristic of this system is the lack of a unified national register or state-level coordinating body, a void that significantly complicates strategic planning and policy evaluation. This network – comprising museums, archives, libraries, and theatres – is notably unevenly distributed, with a high concentration in urban centres like Sarajevo, Tuzla, Banja Luka, Zenica, and Mostar, while rural areas rely almost exclusively on local libraries and cultural centres.

Museums and heritage institutions hold a particularly symbolic and precarious position. Many house collections of international significance still operate under chronic financial strain and unresolved legal status. A striking policy trend is the "legal vacuum" surrounding several state-level institutions established before the 1992–1995 war; they persist without clear founding authorities or stable budgets, relying instead on ad hoc funding and international support. While libraries remain the most widespread infrastructure, their capacity is entirely dependent on varying local budgets, and digital transformation remains limited.

In contrast, the independent cultural sector has emerged as an indispensable driver of innovation in contemporary arts and youth culture. While public institutions often maintain traditional repertory traditions, independent actors provide the space for experimental practices and international cooperation. However, a major structural deficiency is that the significant post-war support from international donors rarely translated into stable domestic public recognition or structural funding. Consequently, rather than a systemic restructuring or outsourcing of public responsibilities, the relationship between public and private non-profit sectors remains characterized by a lack of domestic policy ownership. This prevents the emergence of a coordinated civil sector capable of influencing governance at a systemic level, leaving cultural policy isolated from broader developmental processes.

## 4.2 Cultural Institutions Table

**Table 2: Number of Cultural Institutions by Type**

Domain	Cultural Institution (Subdomain)	Public Sector		Private sector	
		Number in 2024	Number in 2019	Number in 2024	Number in 2019
Cultural Heritage	Cultural heritage sites (recognised)	3 UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Sites; 910+ (National Cultural Heritage Monuments)	4 UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Sites (3 material and 1 immaterial); 890+ (National Cultural Heritage Monuments)	N/A	N/A
	Archaeological sites	240	210	N/A	N/A
Museums	Museum institutions	23	22	N/A	N/A
Archives	Archive institutions	10	10	N/A	N/A
Visual arts	Public art galleries / exhibition halls	19	16	N/A	N/A
Performing arts	Scenic and stable spaces for theatre	68	60	No data available	No data available
	Concert houses	74	83	No data available	No data available
	Theatre companies	19	10	No data available	No data available
	Dance and ballet companies	30	27	Aggregated data for professional ballet, ballet schools and dance companies	
	Symphonic and philharmonic orchestras	6	6	This includes professional symphonic and chamber orchestra	
Libraries	Libraries	1011	1035	N/A	N/A
Audiovisual	Cinemas	34	35	No data available	No data available
	Broadcasting organisations	124	155	Aggregated data for public and private TV and radio stations	

Interdisciplinary	Socio-cultural centres / cultural houses	74	83	N/A	N/A
Others (please explain)	Cultural-artistic amateur associations and ensembles	N/A	N/A	170	207
	Cinemathoteques	10	10	N/A	N/A

Sources: Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BHAS), "Culture and Art Bulletin" (2019, 2024); UNESCO Country Reports; available official data from entity and cantonal Ministries of Culture; and author's desk research of independent cultural reports.

The table illustrates both the density and imbalance of the cultural infrastructure in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The table should be interpreted with caution, as it aggregates institutions across multiple governance levels and does not fully capture differences in institutional capacity, staffing, or programme scope. Data gaps persist, particularly regarding privately operated and hybrid cultural spaces.

## 5. Cultural Funding

### 5.1 Overview

The structure of cultural funding in Bosnia and Herzegovina is defined by chronic underinvestment and extreme fragmentation. Public expenditure is allocated almost exclusively through entity, cantonal, and municipal budgets, as no consolidated national cultural budget exists. This decentralised framework makes it difficult to calculate total spending accurately; consequently, figures for the state level are often unavailable due to the absence of a unified statistical register and a lack of transparency in cross-level reporting.

Public priorities overwhelmingly favour institutional preservation over development. The majority of funding is dedicated to the salaries and basic operational costs of existing public institutions. While this ensures the survival of the physical infrastructure, it leaves very few resources for programme innovation or audience engagement. Project-based funding at various government levels is typically small-scale and irregular. Furthermore, calls for proposals are often criticized for being subject to political discretion, with multi-annual schemes being nearly non-existent.

In comparison to earlier years, the public cultural sector has seen a decrease in funding per capita, although there is a sense of stabilisation/predictability. The lack of growth relative to GDP or European averages reflects a political reluctance to view culture as a transformative public domain. The focus remains on "institutional survival," which restricts culture's ability to contribute to social innovation or employment creation.

Because domestic public support is limited and often non-transparent, non-public funding bodies play a disproportionately important role. International foundations, foreign cultural institutes, and EU programmes provide the most significant support for contemporary arts and capacity building. This has, however, created a structural dependency on external streams, fostering competition rather than collaboration among local actors. Meanwhile, private funding and corporate sponsorship remain marginal. This is largely due to the absence of fiscal incentives and broader economic constraints. Philanthropy remains informal and project-based, and since comprehensive surveys or studies on private cultural investment are largely non-existent, data regarding these contributions is difficult to track. Ultimately, the system remains a dual one: public institutions are sustained through administrative continuity, while the independent scene survives on short-term international interventions.

## 5.2 Public Cultural Expenditure by Level of Government

**Table 3: Public Cultural Expenditure by Level of Government**

Level of government	2024			2019		
	Total expenditure in BAM	Total expenditure in EUR	% share of total	Total expenditure in BAM	Total expenditure in EUR	% share of total
State (Central)	4 000 000	2 051 282	2.92%	4 500 000	2 307 692	2.55%
Regional (Entity and District)	48 000 000	24 615 385	35.04%	62 000 000	31 794 872	35.13%
Regional (Cantonal)	55 000 000	28 205 128	40.15%	70 000 000	35 897 436	39.66%
Local (Municipal)	30 000 000	15 384 615	21.90%	40 000 000	20 512 821	22.66%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>137 000 000</b>	<b>70 256 410</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>176 500 000</b>	<b>90 512 821</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

*Sources: These figures are based on the author's own calculations and harmonizations derived from fragmented data provided by the statistical agencies in Bosnia and Herzegovina and various international organizations. Hence the table is only an approximation of cultural expenditure across the state, entity (FBiH and RS), cantonal, and municipal levels.*

Due to extreme decentralization and inconsistent reporting, these figures are subject to variations in accounting methodologies and differences in how "cultural expenditure" is classified. The lack of harmonized data means these values serve as a structural overview rather than an absolute total. The data demonstrates that financial responsibility is primarily concentrated at the entity and cantonal levels, which provide the bulk of support for libraries, cultural centres, and heritage institutions. This is followed by municipal and city-level funding for local activities. Conversely, state-level contributions remain marginal, reflecting the absence of a centralized cultural budget and the reliance on lower administrative tiers to sustain the country's cultural infrastructure.

### 5.3 Public Cultural Expenditure by Sector

**Table 4: Public Cultural Expenditure by Sector (All levels aggregated)**

Field / Domain	2024			2019		
	Total expenditure in BAM	Total Expenditure in EUR	% Share	Total expenditure in BAM	Total Expenditure in EUR	% Share
Cultural Heritage	50 000 000	25 641 026	36.50%	65 000 000	33 333 333	36.83%
Museums	14 000 000	7 179 487	10.22%	21 000 000	10 769 231	11.90%
Archives	7 000 000	3 589 744	5.11%	11 000 000	5 641 026	6.23%
Visual Arts	4 000 000	2 051 282	2.92%	7 000 000	3 589 744	3.97%
Performing Arts	32 000 000	16 410 256	23.36%	35 500 000	18 205 128	20.11%
Audiovisual/ Multimedia/ Broadcasting	15 000 000	7 692 308	10.95%	17 000 000	8 717 949	9.63%
General cultural administration and discretionary grants for socioculture, cultural education, etc.	15 000 000	7 692 308	10.95%	20 000 000	10 256 410	11.33%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>137 000 000</b>	<b>70 256 410</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>176 500 000</b>	<b>90 512 821</b>	<b>100 %</b>

*Sources: These figures are based on the author's own calculations and harmonizations derived from fragmented data provided by the statistical agencies in Bosnia and Herzegovina and various international organizations. Hence the table is only an approximation of cultural expenditure for specific domains.*

The distribution confirms a strong emphasis on heritage and traditional cultural institutions, with comparatively limited investment in contemporary cultural production, digital culture, or cross-sectoral initiatives.

## 6. Legislation on Culture

### ***6.1 National Legislation***

The legislative framework for culture in Bosnia and Herzegovina is highly fragmented and decentralised, mirroring the broader constitutional structure of the state. There is no comprehensive state-level law on culture. Instead, cultural legislation is adopted at the entity, cantonal, and, in some cases, municipal levels. The absence of a state-level cultural framework law is not merely a technical gap but a political choice shaped by post-Dayton power arrangements, in which the recognition of common cultural governance is perceived as threatening to ethno-political territorialisation. Entity-level laws regulate key areas such as: cultural institutions, cultural heritage protection, libraries and archives, artistic activities and associations, etc.

In the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, cantons possess significant legislative authority over culture, resulting in substantial variation in legal provisions and standards across the country. Republika Srpska operates under a more centralised legislative framework at the entity level, though implementation challenges persist. This legislative fragmentation complicates coordination, standard-setting, and policy evaluation. It also creates legal uncertainty for institutions and cultural workers operating across administrative boundaries. The absence of a state-level cultural framework law has been repeatedly identified as a major structural gap in cultural governance.

### ***6.2 International Legal Frameworks***

Bosnia and Herzegovina is a party to several key international cultural conventions and agreements, which form an important part of its cultural policy environment.

These include:

- UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions
- UNESCO World Heritage Convention
- Council of Europe cultural conventions
- Relevant cultural provisions within the EU integration framework

These instruments provide normative guidance on cultural rights, diversity, heritage protection, and international cooperation. While BiH has formally aligned with these frameworks, implementation at the domestic level remains uneven due to institutional fragmentation, limited administrative capacity, and insufficient financial resources. International conventions often exert greater influence through project-based implementation and donor-supported initiatives than through systemic legislative or policy reform. As a result, international norms coexist with domestic legal frameworks rather than being fully integrated into them.