

MOLDOVA

Short cultural policy profile

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1. Facts and figures

Political system: According to the Constitution adopted in 1994, the Republic of Moldova is a parliamentary republic. Legislative power is exercised by the Parliament.

Official language: Romanian

	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
<i>Population on January 1st¹</i>	2565030	2626588	2643675	2684772	2729634	2780744
<i>GDP in million EUR²</i>	13697.52	11568.57	10116.36	10483.62	9527.34	8450.42
<i>GDP per capita in PPS Index</i>						
<i>General government expenditure (in % of GDP)</i>	36.8%	33.8%	36.6%	32.0%	31.6%	31.0%
<i>Public cultural expenditure, EUR³</i>	21282860	17325944	17087540	16396746	13687903	12038694
<i>Public cultural expenditure as % of GDP</i>	0.16	0.15	0.17	0.16	0.14	0.14
<i>Public cultural expenditure per capita, EURO</i>	7.94	6.46	6.37	6.11	5.10	4.49
<i>Share of cultural employment of total employment</i>	1.9%	1.9%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.1%

¹ <http://statbank.statistica.md/PxWeb/sq/33c9fa7c-b5e9-4d46-ac73-53c5d17aa40d>

² <https://statbank.statistica.md:443/PxWeb/sq/6af8a739-0846-4471-b291-278d813e62e7>

³ <https://buget.mf.gov.md/>

2. Cultural policy system

2.1 Objectives

In 2017, by the decision of the Government, the Ministry of Culture ceased to be a separate entity, and the implementation of policies in the field of culture was transferred to the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research. In 2021, according to Decision No. 147 of 25.08.2021, the Ministry of Culture became a separate entity again.

In 2013, the Culture Development Strategy "Culture 2020" was approved, which aimed to "ensure a viable cultural environment, through the creation of an adequate framework of public policies, the formation of a functional system for the preservation and enhancement of cultural heritage, the promotion of creativity, the development of cultural industries, the efficiency of cultural management, to increase the quality of life of citizens, in the spirit of tolerance and social cohesion". In the document, for the first time, the mission and vision of the national cultural policies for the period 2014-2020 were formulated. Thus, the mission was "to ensure the cultural sector with a coherent, efficient and pragmatic policy framework, starting with a set of priorities", and the vision was the creation by 2020 of a "consolidated, independent and creative cultural sector, with a cultural heritage that is protected and integrated into national and regional public policies, including sustainable development activities: educational, social, economic, touristic and environmental".

The "Culture 2020" strategy established the general objectives for the development of the field:

- Safeguarding the national cultural heritage in all its diversity;
- Ensuring the real and virtual circulation of the cultural product;
- Increasing the economic weight of the cultural sector and creative industries;
- Increasing the contribution of the cultural sector in the development of social cohesion.

On 17.10.2022 the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova adopted the National Development Strategy "European Moldova 2030" - the national long-term strategic vision document, which indicates the country's development directions

and which adapts the priorities, objectives, indicators and targets of international commitments assumed by the Republic of Moldova in the national context. In the field of culture, the strategy established as a general objective improvements in culture and personal development.

2.2 Main features

The Republic of Moldova has an important cultural heritage, a very varied and authentic one, which could also serve as a pivot element for a cultural economy. The cultural infrastructure is in an advanced state of physical decay, which poses a real problem of accessibility of cultural products. Thus, in the period 2015-2021, the cultural infrastructure registered a permanent decline, which is determined by the continuous reduction in the number of libraries and houses of culture. Many libraries and culture houses are disconnected from the heating and electricity systems and are not equipped with furniture. In 2022, 335 houses of culture required repair, and 36 were damaged.

The new national strategy "European Moldova 2030" starts from the fact that increasing the accessibility, quality and relevance of the cultural offer requires higher current and investment expenses, better targeted and capitalized more effectively, at the level of each cultural institution and organization. By contributing to the development of culture, these resources will produce important economic and social returns. Properly valued and integrated into the educational system, culture can strengthen the creative economy and produce important socioeconomic effects, through directly and indirectly created jobs, increasing the touristic attractiveness of communities and the country as a whole, diversifying opportunities for relaxation and leisure, but also the reduction of conflicts, tensions and social violence.

To achieve the general objective, three directions of activity were determined:

- 1) Expanding the access to cultural opportunities and activities;
- 2) Valuing heritage, traditions and cultural diversity;
- 3) Ensuring opportunities for personal development and active citizenship.

The strategy also established the government's priorities for the development of culture. Among the most important are:

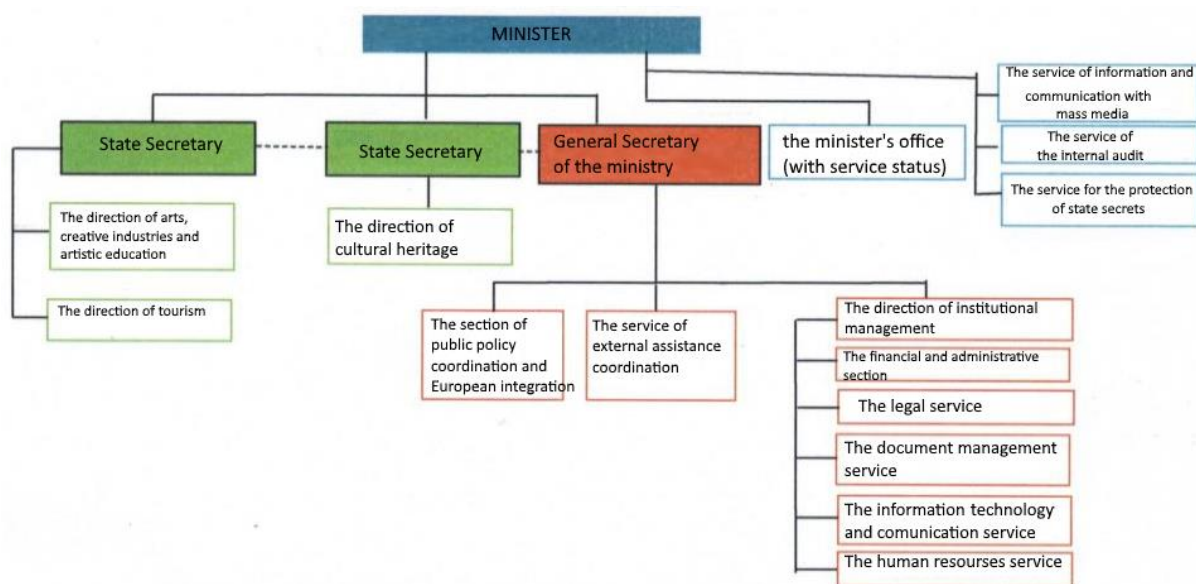
- Documentation, unification and digitization of the book collection in public libraries.
- Establishing a national mechanism for financing the process of restoration and enhancement of cultural heritage and encouraging heritage rehabilitation initiatives from communities and local authorities.
- Creating and strengthening a system of education, training, research, innovation of cultural heritage and workforce development, including through the training of managers in the cultural and creative sector.
- Supporting independent artistic initiatives, including by identifying spaces for workshops, rehearsals, performances, residencies and other activities, but
- also developing sustainable financial mechanisms to support the independent scene.
- Ensuring that all pupils and students acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to promote sustainable development and environmental protection, appreciate cultural diversity and the contribution of culture to sustainable development.

A special focus is established for the promotion of culture through the development of tourism:

- Elaboration and implementation of policies for the promotion of sustainable tourism, creation of public-private partnerships and jobs, promotion of culture and local products.
- Development and diversification of the national tourism product (agritourism, ecotourism, rural, wine, gastronomic and cultural tourism), strengthening the role of local communities and the involvement of the diaspora.
- Formation and consolidation of the tourist destinations, including through actions to promote, preserve and restore historical monuments.
- Consolidation of the country's tourism brand and the continuation of promotional activities in the target markets. Integration of cultural and creative sectors in both rural and urban development policies and national tourism routes.

- Actively supporting the internationalization of the cultural and creative sector, including by capitalizing on the capabilities and presence of the diaspora.

2.3 Governance system: Organisational Organigram



2.4 Background

In the Republic of Moldova, four stages of development of cultural policies can be highlighted: 1940 - 1953 - proletarian policies, 1954 - 1990 - communist-educational policies, 1991 - 2013 - survival policies in transitional conditions, and 2014 - until now - policies of creation of a sustainable environment for the development of culture.

The first stage is the period of reproduction of all communist ideological, political, economic and cultural structures and mechanisms, including the principles that are characteristic of "Soviet culture" in the territory of the newly formed republic. The principle of "the party's culture" provided for the promotion of communist ideology through cultural activities.

Characteristic for the second period, 1953-1991, was the wider inclusion of national specifics in the central cultural policies. In order to ensure the widest possible access of the population to cultural products, which passed ideological

ensorship and which fell within the requirements of the platform of socialist realism, an integrated system of cultural institutions was created in Moldova, which constituted the technical and material basis of the cultural system existing today. The centralized institutionalization of the cultural system and the existence of censorship ensured ideological control over cultural institutions, cultural manifestations and actions. Cultural life was under the total political and ideological control of the respective organs of the Moldovan communist party. Those operating in the cultural sector were forced to conform to the ideological requirements of "socialist realism". Any informal movements in the arts were persecuted and supplanted.

During this period, the denationalization policy continued, with the expulsion of the Romanian language from the essential areas of life, and the defiance of national traditions. All this conditioned the momentum of the democratization and spiritual revival movement from the end of the 80s. The movement was initiated, for the most part, by the cultural intellectuals and led to the decreeing of the Romanian language as the state language in 1989, the transition to Latin script and finally at the proclamation of Moldova's independence from the Soviet Union. This movement caused an increased interest of the population in national culture and traditions.

The unsuccessful economic reforms that took place in the country, the privatization of enterprises based on patrimonial vouchers, the implementation of the land privatization programme, led to a considerable decrease in GDP. The objectives of the cultural policy have changed. The need to save cultural heritage, maintain the system of cultural institutions and create alternative mechanisms to support culture came to the fore.

During the period 2010-2013, the Ministry of Culture, with the assistance of foreign donors, carried out a series of activities with the participation of both foreign and local experts, as well as civil society in order to determine the strategic priorities of the development of the cultural field. The fourth stage of cultural policies in the Republic of Moldova began with the adoption by the government of the Republic of Moldova of the decision regarding the approval of the Culture Development Strategy "Culture 2020" and the Action Plan regarding its implementation. It is a stage that differs from the previous ones due to the existence of important factors at the national and international level:

- 1) the openness of the Republic of Moldova to the experience of developing and implementing contemporary cultural policies in other countries
- 2) the ability of culture to maintain and promote the national and local uniqueness in the process of globalization and
- 3) increasing the role of culture in the sustainable development of modern society.

3. Current cultural affairs

3.1 Key developments

In February 2023, the Parliament approved the activity programme of the new government, a "Prosperous, Safe, European Moldova". The vision of the programme was determined as "Moldova - a country with prosperous citizens, with strong and transparent institutions, with a competitive business environment, for which the relationship with the state is an accelerator and not a series of obstacles. We want to be full members of the European Union". To achieve this vision, it is necessary to revive the economy that has been affected by the regional and global crises. Building a prosperous and resilient economy requires accessible financial resources, clear and simple rules that can provide citizens and businesses with opportunities, well-paid jobs and well-being. It is necessary for the country to open up to innovation, investment diversification and competitive integration into the global economy. Accelerated economic growth will allow the allocation of more resources for education and culture, health and social protection, for a clean environment and quality public services. The following were established as objectives in the field of culture:

- 1) raising the level of culture in society and personal development of the citizen;
- 2) protecting, restoring and enhancing material heritage, preserving and promoting traditions and cultural diversity.

To achieve these objectives, the following key medium-term priorities were formulated:

- Creation of a new support and subsidy system in the public, private and independent artistic and creative field;
- Rethinking the organizational model of the Culture Houses, libraries and museums, as well as advancing their role as community integrators;
- Digitization of the book collection in public libraries;
- Establishing a national financing mechanism for the process of restoration and enhancement of cultural heritage and its integration into the cultural tourism circuit;
- Creating and strengthening a sustainable system of artistic education. The professionalization of managers in the cultural and creative sector by improving the offer of initial and continuous training;
- Development and diversification of the national tourist product (agritourism, ecotourism, rural, wine, gastronomic and cultural tourism), strengthening the role of local communities and the involvement of the diaspora;
- Consolidation of investments in the development of tourist infrastructure, formation and consolidation of tourist destinations, including through actions to promote, preserve and restore historical monuments;
- Consolidation of the country's tourism brand and the continuation of its promotion activities in the target markets;
- Integration of the cultural and creative sector in rural and urban development policies and in national tourist routes;
- Development of support measures for entrepreneurial initiatives in the cultural and creative sector;
- Using the results of scientific research in rural and urban development policies, as well as in national and international tourist routes.

3.2 Key themes

Some of the key issues that the government needs to focus on are:

- 1) improvement of the financing system of cultural activities;
- 2) increasing the efficiency of the activity of cultural organizations;
- 3) creation of a system for continuous improvement of management in culture;

4) development of regional and local cultural potential.

To reform the culture financing system, it is necessary to rethink the institutional financing, which currently dominates, and increase the financing of cultural activities. A first step was taken in 2022 by the decision of the Government of the Republic of Moldova to approve the National Programme "Cultural Voucher".

The programme represents the state instrument through which young people, who have reached the age of 18, are granted a cultural voucher with a nominal value, which can be used in the following 12 months to procure services and cultural assets. "The purpose of the Programme is to facilitate and improve the integration of young people in the cultural life of the country, increasing the capacity of the cultural field to contribute to social cohesion, promoting and developing cultural values, improving the cultural offer, increasing the transparency of the financing of cultural activities, encouraging consumption and cultural mobility"⁴.

The activities are aimed at increasing cultural consumption among young people, increasing the role and place of cultural organizations in the process of educating young people, increasing the efficiency of financing cultural organizations and strengthening competition between them. Among the products and services that young people can benefit from with the voucher is the purchase of books. According to the report of the Ministry of Culture, by April 2023, over 1,300 young people have benefited from the cultural voucher. The most requested services are the purchase of books and movie tickets. This means that more than half of the young people who have reached the age of 18 have activated their cultural voucher worth 1000 MDL, offered by the state. By means of the voucher, over 2,830 transactions were carried out, with a total value of approximately 500 thousand MDL. The most payments were made for books – about 2200. Among the books purchased, most are personal development books.

Also, in 2022, the project-based support programme for the cultural production of theatre and concert institutions was initiated.

⁴ <https://gov.md/sites/default/files/document/attachments/subiect-12-nu-743-mc-2022.pdf>

Table 1: Activity of theatre and concert institutions, 2017-2021⁵

	<i>2017</i>	<i>2018</i>	<i>2019</i>	<i>2020</i>	<i>2021</i>
<i>Theatres, shows</i>	2791	2573	2483	944	1641
<i>Philharmonic, concerts</i>	165	155	151	74	54
<i>Artistic groups, concerts</i>	133	178	178	106	140

The year 2022 was the year of the return of cultural activity after the 2020-2021 pandemic. But until 2019, the decline in activity in the theatre and philharmonic sectors can be observed.

3.3 International cultural cooperation

International cooperation in the field of culture is one of the functions of the Ministry of Culture. Thus, the Ministry is responsible for the implementation of normative acts and the implementation of international treaties of the Republic of Moldova in the fields of culture, national heritage and tourism, drawing up reports on their execution, as well as concluding international treaties. The public policy coordination and European integration section operates within the Ministry.

Cultural cooperation is determined by the Association Agreement between the EU and the Republic of Moldova, signed on June 27, 2014 in Brussels. The agreement establishes a new legal framework for promoting relations to a higher degree of political association and economic integration, including activities in the fields of culture, education and tourism. In developing national cultural policies, the Republic of Moldova can benefit from the experience and good practices of EU member countries. The cooperation is based on the principles laid down in the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005). The agreement provides for the following areas of interest to

⁵ <https://statbank.statistica.md:443/PxWeb/sq/3c0636a8-4671-4045-b6f0-57889479962e>

be developed: cooperation and cultural exchanges, as well as the mobility of art and artists; intercultural dialogue; dialogue on cultural and audio-visual policies; cooperation within international organizations and forums, such as UNESCO and the Council of Europe, for the development of cultural diversity, the preservation and use of cultural and historical heritage, and cooperation in the field of mass media.

4. Cultural Institutions

4.1 Overview

In the Republic of Moldova there are 1682 localities organized into 916 villages-residences (communes). In every commune there are at least two cultural institutions: a library and a house of culture. The table represents the evolution of the cultural infrastructure in the period 2017-2021.

Table 2: Cultural infrastructure, 2017-2021

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
<i>Theatres</i>	16	16	16	16	16
<i>Philharmonic</i>	1	1	1	1	1
<i>Libraries</i>	2704	2690	2674	2655	2632
<i>Museums</i>	126	127	127	130	131
<i>Houses of culture</i>	1219	1216	1216	1197	1194
<i>Cinema installations (at the end of the year)</i>	11	11	10	10	10
<i>Total organisations</i>	4077	4061	4044	4009	3984

The number of cultural institutions registers a permanent decline which is determined by the continuous reduction in the number of libraries and culture houses. Thus, the number of libraries decreased from 2704 in 2017 to 2632 in 2021, which is a decrease of 2.7%. Likewise, the number of culture houses also decreased, from 1219 in 2017 to 1194 in 2021, which is about 2.0%. In general, the number of cultural institutions decreased from 4077 in 2017 to 3984 in 2021, a decrease of 2.5%. Although the number of cultural institutions is decreasing, in relation to the population, this index is increasing. That is, the rate of reduction in the number of the population is higher than the rate of decrease in the number of cultural institutions.

4.2 Data on selected public and private cultural institutions

The private cultural sector in the Republic of Moldova is in an early phase of development. In recent years, significant progress can be seen in the promotion and support of cultural and artistic activities carried out by the private organizations. Since 2010, there has been a programme to support cultural projects of non-governmental organizations. In recent years, projects have been approved in the amount of: 2018 – 3 974 000 MDL (19 8700 Euros), 2019 – 3 621 279 MDL (181 063 Euros), 2020, 2021 – 5 000 000 MDL (250 000 Euros) each, 2022 – 4 376 391 MDL (220 030 Euros).

Since 2018, the National Cinematography Centre has been active in the Republic of Moldova, which aims to support the development of the cinematographic industry. During 4 years, 40 film projects of different categories were supported. The 2018-2020 annual budget was 5.0 million MDL (250 000 Euros). In 2021, 2022 - more than 8.0 million MDL were allocated annually. Moldovan productions have won 54 awards at international festivals.

The private sector is well developed in the field of book production. In recent years, several modern bookstores have opened, and several national networks have been created. Currently, there are more than 70 bookstores, most of them concentrated in Chisinau, where they sell alongside the products of Moldovan publishers and books imported from Romania, Russia, Ukraine, etc. In the last three years, the number of publishing houses, to some extent, has stabilized,

registering in 2022 – 163 enterprises. Cultural production is mostly carried out by state institutions (see table 3).

Table 3: Production of cultural institutions in the period 2017-2021.

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
<i>Theatres, shows</i>	2791	2573	2483	944	1641
<i>Philharmonic, concerts</i>	165	155	151	74	54
<i>Artistic groups, concerts</i>	133	178	178	106	140
<i>Houses of culture, events</i>	53893	61978	63872	21893	25660
<i>Publishing products, book and magazine titles</i>	2831	2705	2389	2598	2865

The activity of cultural institutions was strongly influenced by the pandemic. The year 2022 was the year of the return of cultural activities.

5. Cultural Funding

5.1 Overview

Funding for culture in the Republic of Moldova is ensured through several sources, including the state budget, local budgets, international programmes and grants, private sponsorships and income generated by cultural activities.

The state budget is the main source of funding for culture. The allocation of funds is the responsibility of the Ministry of Culture, which distributes the budget to state cultural institutions, such as museums, theatres, libraries, artistic collectives and other subordinate cultural organizations. These funds are used to cover personnel expenses, operating expenses, the purchase of equipment and materials, the organization of exhibitions, performances and other cultural activities. A good part of the budget

allocations is intended for the maintenance and development of the cultural infrastructure, such as the renovation and modernization of buildings, the arrangement of spaces, the provision of necessary equipment and technologies.

Local budgets are another important source of funding for culture. City halls and district councils allocate funds for the support and development of local cultural institutions, the organization of cultural events and the maintenance of cultural infrastructure. Local public spending on culture at the local level contributes to the promotion of cultural diversity, the stimulation of artistic creation and the development of local communities. The level and allocation of these expenses varies according to the priorities and availability of financial resources of the local authorities.

The funds allocated for the support and operation of local cultural institutions cover the expenses of personnel, rent, utilities, and the purchase of equipment and materials necessary for the performance of cultural activities. Local public expenditure directed to the organization of cultural events, such as festivals, exhibitions, and concerts, covers the costs of logistics, promotion, space rental and other expenses necessary for the holding of these events. Local authorities can allocate financial resources for the preservation and restoration of local cultural heritage, such as historic buildings, monuments, archaeological sites, etc.

The importance of increasing local public spending on culture lies in promoting accessibility to culture, stimulating community participation in cultural activities, developing local talents and strengthening the cultural identity of the community. By properly allocating financial resources, local authorities can help create a vibrant cultural environment and improve the quality of life in the community.

In addition to funding from the state budget and local funds, the Republic of Moldova also benefits from international programmes and grants. They are

provided by international organizations, embassies, foundations and other entities that support cultural projects and initiatives in the country.

In the period 2017-2022, the nominal value of the allocations for culture was constantly increasing, but the share of spending on culture in GDP decreased in 2017-2020 from 0.6% to 0.4%, and was due to return to 0.6% in 2022.

5.2 Public cultural expenditure by level of government

The Ministry of Culture has three concert institutions, 11 theatre institutions, 7 museums, 2 national libraries and 13 other public institutions in different sectors under its authority. The state budget for service expenses in the field of culture in the period 2017-2022 is presented in the table here:⁶

Table 4: Public cultural expenditures, in EUR, 2017-2022

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Services in the field of culture, thousands of Euros	12044,48	13687,9	16396,75	17087,54	17334,23	21293,56

5.3. Public cultural expenditure per sector

The expenses for theatre and concert institutions represent an important component of the state budget intended for the support and operation of the institutions. These institutions include theatres and concert halls, artistic collectives that promote performances and events in the field of music, theatre, opera, ballet and other forms of artistic expression.

⁶ <https://buget.mf.gov.md/>

Table 3: Public expenditures transfer to cultural institutions, in EUR, 2017-2020

	2017	2018	2019	2020
<i>Transfers, in thousands of Euros</i>	5862,57	6152,16	7956,32	8898,74

6. Legislation on Culture

6.1 Overview national cultural legislation

The basic law, which regulates the cultural field and determines the basic principles of the state's cultural policy in the Republic of Moldova, is Culture Law no. 413 adopted on 27.05.1999. In accordance with the law, the state sets the priorities and provides the legal basis for cultural activities. The central public administration body that coordinates cultural activities in the country is the respective ministry. The government develops and finances in the prescribed manner state programmes for the preservation and development of culture, and determines the directions, forms and methods of their implementation. The state contributes to ensuring broad access of the population to cultural events and values.

In the Republic of Moldova, a regulatory framework was formed for the protection of cultural heritage, which consists of national laws, as well as international conventions signed by the Republic of Moldova: law no. 1530 of 22.06.1993 regarding the

protection of monuments, the law regarding the protection of archaeological heritage no. 218 of 17.09.2010, law no. 280 of 27.12.2011 regarding the protection of movable national cultural heritage, law no. 58 of 29.03.2012 regarding the protection of intangible cultural heritage, law no. 161 of 20.07.2017 regarding the regime of graves and war memorials, museum law no. 262 of 07.12.2017.

Cultural activities are regulated by sectoral laws, which define the legal framework for policies in these sectors. The Law on theatre, circus and concert organizations no. 1421-XV of December 31, 2002, establishes the basic principles of the creative

activity of theatres, circuses and concert organizations, the ways of their creation, reorganization, liquidation, financing and management. On July 20, 2017, a new Law no. 160 on libraries was adopted which establishes the organization and operation of the national library system and aims to strengthen the role of the library in modern society.

The creative industries, which cover everything that is produced by artistic creativity and has economic potential, generates income through taxes and fees paid, creates jobs and produces profit, have been developing more and more in recent years. Being a newer direction of cultural policies, the normative-legislative development framework is to be created. Among the laws already adopted, we can mention the Law on folk arts and crafts no. 135 of 20.03.2003, the Law regarding editorial activity no. 939-XIV of 20.04.2000, Cinematography Law no. 116 of 03.07.2014, the law regarding creative people and creative unions no. 21 of 01.03.2013.

6.2 Overview international cultural legislation

Becoming a full member of UNESCO on May 27, 1992, the Republic of Moldova ratified the Convention on the Protection of the World Natural and Cultural Heritage and the Convention on the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. With the ratification of the Conventions, the Republic of Moldova benefits from the right to propose goods/sites of cultural and natural heritage for inclusion in the UNESCO World Heritage List.

Also, within the collaboration with the EU, a series of European documents were adopted: the European Cultural Convention, adopted in Paris, on 18.12.1954, in force in the Republic of Moldova from 24.05.1994, the Convention for the Preservation of the Architectural Heritage of Europe, adopted in Grenada, on 03. 10 1985, in force for the Republic of Moldova from 01.04.2002, the European Convention for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage, adopted in La Valetta, 16.01.1992, in force for the Republic of Moldova from 22.06.2002, the European Landscape Convention, adopted in Florence on 20.10. 2000, in force for the Republic of Moldova from 22.06.2002, the

Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict together with Protocol I to the Convention, approved in The Hague on 14.05.1954, in force for the Republic of Moldova from 09.03.2000, the Framework Convention

of the Council Europe on the social value of cultural heritage, adopted in Faro on 27.10.2005, signed on 11.11.2008, and the European Convention on cinematographic co-production, adopted on 2 October 1992, signed by the Republic of Moldova on 11 January 2008.