

Switzerland

Short cultural policy profile

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DATE: November 2022

1. Fact and figures

- **Political system:** democratic federal state with direct democratic elements and a two-chamber parliament
- **Official language:** German, French, Italian. Romansh is an official language in dealings with persons who speak this language¹

	<i>Latest avail. data</i>	<i>Latest avail. data - 5y</i>
<i>Population on January 1st</i>	8 736 510 (2022)	8 419 550 (2017)
<i>GDP in million EUR</i>	187 937 (2022-Q2)	156 777 (2017-Q2)
	687 110.4 (2021, ann.)	628 729.6 (2016, ann.)
<i>GDP per capita in PPS Index</i>	159 (2021)	168 (2016)
<i>General government expenditure (in % of GDP)</i>	37.8 (2020); 32.8 (2019)	33.2 (2015); 32.9 (2014)
<i>Public cultural expenditure in million</i>	3 018.9 CHF (2019)	2 831.5 CHF (2014)
<i>Public cultural expenditure as % of GDP</i>	0.42 (2019)	0.42 (2014)
<i>Public cultural expenditure per Capita</i>	352 CHF (2019)	346 CHF (2014)
<i>Share of cultural employment of total employment</i>	5.1% (2020)	5.5% (2015)

¹ SR 441.1 Federal Act on the National Languages and Understanding between the Linguistic Communities, LangA, available at: https://www.fedlex.admin.ch/eli/cc/2009/821/en#art_5

Sources:

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

GDP in million EUR, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/namq_10_gdp/default/table?lang=en

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

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

Public cultural expenditure in million, <https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/de/home/statistiken/kultur-medien-informationsgesellschaft-sport/kultur/kulturfinanzierung/oeffentliche.assetdetail.19524198.html>

Public cultural expenditure as % of GDP and per Capita, <https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/de/home/statistiken/kultur-medien-informationsgesellschaft-sport/kultur/kulturfinanzierung/oeffentliche.assetdetail.19524204.html>

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

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

2. Cultural policy system

2.1 Objectives

The *Federal Act on the Promotion of Culture* (Culture Promotion Act/[Kulturförderungsgesetz KFG](#)), in force since 2012, outlines the main objectives of cultural policy in Switzerland:

- strengthening the cohesion and cultural (and linguistic) diversity in Switzerland
- promoting a richly diverse and qualitatively outstanding range of cultural activities and offerings
- establishing favourable conditions for cultural workers and cultural institutions
- providing and facilitating access to culture
- making Swiss cultural work known abroad

Linked to these goals are the preservation and mediation of Switzerland's [cultural heritage](#), the protection of the [architectural heritage](#) or the [protection of minorities](#).

With cultural matters being a "cantonal responsibility" ([Art 69 para. 1 BV](#)), Cantons and municipalities develop their own cultural strategies with local and regional priorities, goals and funding instruments (nearly 90% of public cultural expenditure in 2018).

Subsidiary to the cantons, the Confederation supports cultural endeavours of nationwide interest and has parallel competences, for example, in the promotion of filmmaking and film culture as a primary task of the Confederation, as well as in music education.

The Confederation's cultural policy is set out in the [Culture Dispatch](#) ("Kulturbotschaft", since 2012). In order to define cultural policy at the federal

level, a distinction is made between a broader sociological and a narrower "practical concept of culture": through the relevant federal legislation and through the cultural policy priorities set in the Culture Dispatch.² The policy for **2021-2024** builds on the three central axes of action from the period 2016-2020: "Cultural Participation", "Social Cohesion" and "Creation and Innovation".

2.2 Main features

Switzerland's cultural policy system is characterised by four principles, as described by Rico Valär:³

1. **Federalism** as an organisational principle for the autonomy of the cantons and municipalities
2. **Subsidiarity** as a distribution principle for the primary cultural policy responsibility of the lower levels of government
3. **Cultural diversity and multilingualism** as identity principles
4. **Pluralism of funding bodies and instruments** as funding principles

Cultural policy in Switzerland unfolds through the exploration of national identity and cohesion between and across four linguistic regions and through active citizenship participation, anchored in Switzerland's political system with its various [direct democratic instruments](#). Foreign nationals make up more than 25% (2021). The cultural topography is further shaped by the geographical location with the bordering countries of France, Germany, Italy and Austria. The private sector plays a significant role in the Swiss cultural sector especially at the communal or cantonal level.

Federalism and Subsidiarity

In Switzerland most competences are assigned to the cantons by *Constitutional Law* (1848). With the "total revision" of the Swiss Federal Constitution in 1999, the support of culture - outside of specific areas such as film or nature and heritage conservation - was given an explicit constitutional basis for the first time (Art. 69 BV).⁴ With purely declaratory value, it confirms the principle that culture falls within the primary competency of the cantons: "Cultural matters are a cantonal responsibility".⁵ The Confederation's cultural competency is limited to cultural activities of "national interest". For a definition of "national interest" see [Article 6 of the Culture Promotion Act](#).

² Federal Office of Culture: [Botschaft zur Förderung der Kultur in den Jahren 2021–2024](#), pp. 3141.

³ see Valär, Rico Franc, Georg Kreis: *Wie viel Kulturpolitik braucht die Schweiz?*, 2019, pp. 123-136.

⁴ see André Briel/Oliver Waespi/Daniel Zimmermann: *Kulturrecht des Bundes*, in: Ehrenzeller, Bernhard. *Schweizerisches Bundesverwaltungsrecht, Bildungs-, Kultur- und Sprachenrecht*. Vol. 9. Helbing Lichtenhahn Verlag, 2018, pp. 584.)

⁵ Art 69 para. 1 BV.

Switzerland's policy-making system counts among its ranks three primary political strata: the federal, cantonal, and municipal levels.

Subsidiarity presupposes that the lowest, smallest or least centralised authority takes responsibility if possible, allowing for a range of autonomy. The higher levels of government lend primarily financial subsidiary support. This is also reflected in the data for public cultural expenditure: in 2018, the biggest share of 48.9% was spent by the municipalities, 40.3% by the cantons and 10.8% by the federal government.

Switzerland's cultural tapestry is therefore more a patchwork of twenty-six cantonal approaches than a single, national design.

Because of the flexibility of the Swiss model, difficulties are present, such as the duplication or overlapping of efforts. Concentrating cultural policy measures on a common goal is difficult and the elaboration of mid and long-term perspectives is a complicated task. Discussions in policymaking at the national level can take years and at times, result in expensive compromises.

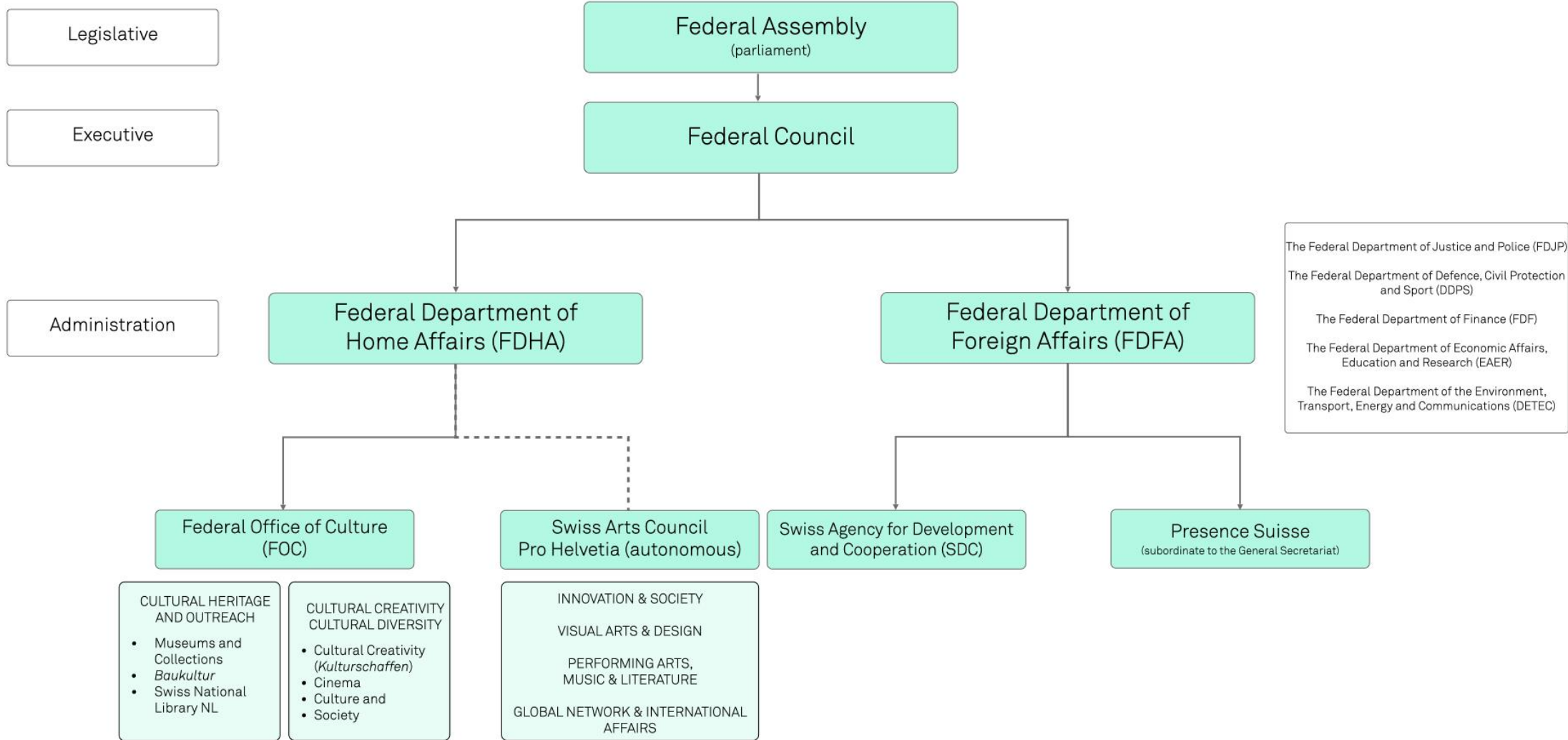
Main national actors in cultural policy

The cultural policy of the Confederation is mainly based on the interaction of four institutions: the Federal Office of Culture (FOC), the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia, the Swiss National Library (NL), and the Swiss National Museum (SNM) (both organisationally assigned to FOC), complemented by the activities of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and Presence Switzerland.⁶

As the leading cultural policy authority, the **Federal Office of Culture (FOC)** implements the cultural policy of the Confederation and coordinates the activities of the other federal agencies. The **Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia** is an autonomous institution entirely funded by the federal government that supports and disseminates Swiss culture and arts between regions as well as abroad. The [Culture Dispatch](#), published for every legislative period, has been the main strategic and financial steering instrument for federal cultural policy since 2012.

⁶ Federal Office of Culture: [Botschaft zur Förderung der Kultur in den Jahren 2021–2024 \(2020\)](#), pp. 3142ff.

2.3 Governance system: Organisational Organigram (Federal level)



2.4 Historical background for the past 70 years

Before 1950

Support for culture in Switzerland has developed slowly, decentrally and primarily as a phenomenon of civil society.⁷ Until the late 1950s, the Confederation's cultural activities were mostly based on an unwritten cultural competence tacitly derived from the Constitution.⁸ An important funding measure was the establishment of the working group Pro Helvetia in 1939, to preserve the intellectual independence of culture in Switzerland in the face of the threat posed by National Socialist Germany.

1950-1960

The first provisions on culture, limited to certain subject areas, found their way into the Constitution in the 1950s, for example, articles on film or on cultural heritage protection.

1960-1970

In the 1960s, the first cultural laws were drafted and voted on in various cantons. Discussion on cultural policy intensified and resulted in the establishment of the Federal Office of Culture (FOC) (1975).

1970-1980

While early Swiss cultural policy focused on the preservation of cultural heritage and identity, the demand for a "culture for all" as a guiding idea found its way into Switzerland at the end of the 1960s. It manifested itself in the so-called [Clottu Report](#) (1975), a key document on the role of the Swiss public sector in the field of culture. It called for, among other things, an article on culture in the constitution.

1980-1990

In 1981, the "Federal Cultural Initiative" called for 1% of the federal budget to be allocated to culture and revived the cultural policy debate. It was unsuccessful at the ballot box.⁹

1990-2000

In 1991, the Confederation launched another cultural initiative for a constitutional article on culture, which was rejected in 1994. It was not until the revision of the Federal Constitution in 1999 that the promotion of culture in Switzerland was placed on a firm constitutional basis.

⁷ see Zembylas, Tasos: *Öffentliche Kulturförderung und Kulturfinanzierung*, 2012.

⁸ see André Briel/Oliver Waespi/Daniel Zimmermann: *Kulturrecht des Bundes*, in: Ehrenzeller, Bernhard. *Schweizerisches Bundesverwaltungsrecht, Bildungs-, Kultur- und Sprachenrecht*. Vol. 9. Helbing Lichtenhahn Verlag, 2018, pp. 582ff.

⁹ As a result of the voting procedure at the time.

2000-2010

The legal basis of the revised constitution was passed by the Swiss Parliament as the *Federal Act on the Promotion of Culture* in 2009. It places great emphasis on precisely delimiting federal powers in comparison with those of the cantons, communes, and cities, which are primarily responsible for the promotion of culture. Under the Act, the financial steering of the federal government's promotion of culture is affected by means of a four-year payment framework (the *Culture Dispatch*) and stands as a declaration of the federal cultural policy guidelines.

2010-2020

On this basis, strategic aims were defined for the first time for the most important actors of the Confederation between 2012 and 2015 in the first *Culture Dispatch*.

3. Current cultural affairs

3.1 Key developments

The three central axes of the federal cultural policy, as outlined in the *Culture Dispatch* for 2021-2024, are: cultural participation, social cohesion and creation and innovation. A particular emphasis is given to digitalisation. These points were already defined for the 2016-2020 funding period and emphasise continuity.

The COVID 19 pandemic has further accelerated and made visible various developments that were already underway before: the precarious situation in which many cultural workers live and their inadequate social security, or the shrinking audience in Swiss cinemas, declining significance of traditional media offerings and the increasing importance of streaming platforms and new digital practices.

"Adequate compensation of cultural workers" - fair pay - is among the priorities in the work programme of the National Cultural Dialogue 2021-2024. Improving the working and financial situation of cultural workers will be one of the core issues in the preparation of the *Culture Dispatch* 2025-2028, as well as a flexibilisation of funding models.

In 2020/2021, the Confederation and the cantons paid out a total of roughly CHF 1.1 billion to mitigate the economic consequences of the **COVID-19 pandemic** in the cultural sector. Compared to the economy as a whole, there was a much more pronounced decline in the cultural sector in the first pandemic year 2020. The number of cultural enterprises fell by 1.3% and the number of employees by 3.0%

to the level of 2012, after a constant increase since 2011.¹⁰ After the restrictions and the partial standstill of cultural life during the the COVID-19 pandemic, there were signs of recovery in 2021, such as in the number of visits to museums, in film production or language exchanges. In contrast, the festival industry, the live music sector and theatres suffered considerably from production bottlenecks, cancellations and lack of audiences in 2021 and into 2022.

In 2022, a revision of the **Film Act** was approved by the electorate. As a result, investments by streaming providers in filmmaking in Switzerland will increase in the coming years.

In view of the invasion of **Ukraine**, specific measures were taken: In 2022, the Federal Office of Culture i.e. launched grants to support the protection of movable cultural property in Ukraine.¹¹ The City of Zurich made special contributions to cultural organisations that support cultural workers who have fled Ukraine.¹²

Other issues of national and regional importance in the last few years are:

- diversity and equal opportunities in the cultural sector
- creation of framework conditions for creative work
- support for interactive and new media, especially considering the context of digitalisation, streaming platforms; digital value creation
- the extension of "art pieces" (oeuvre), as well as addressing intellectual property rights and copyright laws
- broader debates on cultural funding (law on foundations and lotteries)
- Relationship and use of "free" and committed public cultural funds (interplay of independent scene and cultural institutions)
- balancing of metropolitan burdens between rural and urban regions or cantons
- lay culture and the importance of volunteers in the cultural sector
- the discussion on new funding programmes taking into account the dynamics of the cultural and creative industries
- Global connectivity and competition
- Nazi looted art and cultural assets from colonial contexts

¹⁰ <https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/de/home/aktuell/neue-veroeffentlichungen.assetdetail.23566122.html>

¹¹ <https://www.bak.admin.ch/bak/en/home/cultural-heritage/transfer-of-cultural-property/massnahmen-ukraine.html>

¹² <https://www.stadt-zuerich.ch/kultur/de/index/foerderung/ukraine-sonderbeitraege-an-kulturorganisationen.html>

3.2 Key themes

Income situation and social security of cultural workers

According to [Suisseculture Sociale](#), the proportion of professional cultural workers earning CHF 40 000 or less has risen from 50% to just under 60% between 2016 and 2021 (detached from the effects of the current Covid 19 crisis, according to SCS). This corresponds to a net monthly wage of around CHF 3 000, whereas the gross median wage in Switzerland is around CHF 6 500 per month. According to the [study](#), the social security of cultural workers in Switzerland in old age and in the event of loss of income also remains inadequate.

Digitisation and the Cultural sector

The Culture Dispatch 2021-2024 places special emphasis on the ongoing process of **digitisation** shaping all areas of society. Recent developments and planned measures include:

- As in the past, the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia will regularly review the impact of digitisation on funding instruments and adapt them where necessary. Since 2021, it has run its own section to support Swiss creatives in design and interactive media.
- The SNM, the other museums of the FOC and the NL will increasingly address original digital cultural assets ("digitally born") and further develop their 4D object and image database. The SNM will also complete the digital transformation in the areas of marketing and communication.
- In addition to the ongoing digitisation of significant works from its museums and collections, the FOC will examine whether it will award project grants for digitisation projects of museums and collections in the future.
- Streaming and mostly global online platforms have recently been a topic of attention. In 2022, a revision of the Film Act, which among other things includes mandatory investments by streaming providers in filmmaking in Switzerland, was approved by the electorate.

Baukultur

Switzerland is taking a leading role in the field of Baukultur, notably through the [Davos Declaration](#), which was adopted at the first Conference of European Ministers of Culture in 2018. The measures defined by the FOC for the period 2021-2024 relate in particular to the promotion of competence in the area of *Baukultur*. A second Davos conference on high quality Baukultur will take place between January 14 and 16, 2023. This conference will lead to the creation of a Baukultur Alliance gathering members of the private and of the public sector.

Cultural, social diversity and inclusion

Article 1 of the Culture Promotion Act, which came into force in 2012, stresses the need to foster cultural diversity: it emphasises both exchanges between cultural and linguistic communities in Switzerland as well as cultural exchange abroad.

In the 2021-2024 Culture Dispatch, culture and society are one of the main priorities. Measures concerning cultural participation include: Cultural education, e.g. to promote reading, strengthening music lessons for all children and young people, and creating a legal basis for living traditions.

In the area of [diversity and equal opportunities in the cultural sector](#), the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia has defined the following goals for 2021-2024:

- support cultural institutions and provide them with active guidance in the development of diversity-oriented processes
- reduce barriers for cultural practitioners from marginalised population groups to the Swiss cultural sector and to opportunities for grants
- collect and disseminate data and facts on diversity in the Swiss cultural sector.

Concrete measures are, for example, "She Got Game", a funding programme 2022-2024 to support women in the interactive media sector.

Gender relations in the Swiss cultural sector

Gender inequality is a topic that has gained additional political attention over recent years. In 2021, the Federal Council adopted the Swiss government's first national strategy specifically aimed at promoting gender equality ([2030 gender equality strategy](#)).

The appropriate representation of gender in all relevant areas of cultural creation is an objective of the Confederation's cultural policy. In 2021, the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia presented a preliminary study on gender relations with three key findings:

1. women are under-represented in leadership positions: At the level of strategic management (sponsoring bodies) of the cultural institutions and enterprises included in the analysis, women only represent 28.8 per cent of presidential positions.
2. Female artists and their work have lower visibility and receive awards less often
3. women earn less than men: The data examined gave the first indications of a gender pay gap in favour of men.

The preliminary study recommended further research and data on aspects as accessibility to education, gender pay gap and career trajectories.

Since 2016, the FOC has put several measures in place to support gender equality in the Swiss film industry. [In 2020](#), the share of feature films funded by women directors was over 50% for the first time in 5 years (54%).

Media pluralism and content diversity

The media play a central role in Swiss direct democracy. In 2018, the "No Billag" Popular Initiative ("[Say yes to abolishing radio and television fees \(Abolition of Billag fees\)](#)"), looking to suppress the public fee towards television and radio, was rejected by the population (71.6% No votes). This fee enables SRG SSR to be financed at national, regional and local level for their programming in the country's four languages. This reaction confirmed the important place given to this public structure and to media independence.

Cultural Dispatch 2025 to 2028: six thematic areas

The Federal Cultural Policy 2025 to 2028 will focus on six thematic areas:¹³

1. **Culture and Digital Transformation**
2. **Culture and Sustainable Development**
3. **Cultural Heritage as Living Memory**
4. **Updating the Cultural Funding System:** Making funding systems more flexible and dynamic
5. **Culture as a World of Work:** Improving working conditions of cultural workers
6. **Governance in the Cultural Sector:** The interplay and coordination between the different funding bodies and levels of government

3.3 International Cultural Cooperation

The Confederation's cultural activities in the international context take place in different areas: the promotion and dissemination of Swiss culture and artists abroad, institutional collaboration and networking, and investing in the artists and cultures of partner countries, recognising them as intrinsic to a sustainable process of development.

The main cultural multilateral platforms are the European Union, UNESCO, the Council of Europe and the International Organisation of the Francophonie.

¹³ <https://www.admin.ch/gov/de/start/dokumentation/medienmitteilungen.msg-id-89884.html>;
<https://www.admin.ch/gov/de/start/dokumentation/medienmitteilungen.msg-id-91493.html>

Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia's work focuses on promoting Swiss art and culture outside Switzerland and to foster international cultural exchange. It operates and finances six Liaison Offices worldwide, in Cairo, Johannesburg, Moscow (since 2017), New Delhi, Shanghai and South America (since 2021).

The **FOC's** international engagement focuses on political exchanges, the establishment of relevant framework conditions and the representation of Switzerland in various multilateral platforms. It oversees implementing and monitoring institutional cooperation regarding bilateral film coproduction, transfer of cultural goods and the preservation of cultural heritage as well as for various Cultural Conventions.

The **Federal Department of Home Affairs (FDHA)** and the **Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA)** coordinate their activities within the framework of international cultural policy. By cultivating relations with regional authorities, cities and institutions outside Switzerland, the **cantons and cities** play an important role in facilitating partnerships on different levels.

The **FDFA** offers its network of external representations and different promotional platforms to the FDHA to assist in the fulfilment of its cultural policy projects outside Switzerland. Within FDFA, **Presence Switzerland** (PRS) supports the presence of Swiss culture abroad.

Many questions currently remain unanswered about the relationship between Switzerland and the EU: after seven years of negotiations, the Federal Council informed the EU in May 2021 that it would not sign the Framework Agreement. As a non-member of the EU, Switzerland has no access to European programmes, e.g. the Creative Europe programme.

In the 2021-2024 period, the Confederation intends to pay special attention to cultural relations with the neighbouring countries of Germany, Austria, France and Italy.

4. Cultural Institutions

4.1 Overview

There are only a few national cultural institutions. The landscape of Swiss cultural institutions is primarily and historically shaped by federalism and subsidiarity: a patchwork and interplay of cantonal and municipal approaches in public-private relationships and tensions. Decentralisation, the re-allocation of public responsibilities, and public-private-partnerships are well embodied.

Museums

Switzerland has one of the highest concentrations of museums in the world. Since 1950, the number of museums in Switzerland has tripled. Museums are among the most visited cultural institutions. Over $\frac{2}{3}$ are organised under private law, the public sector (municipalities and cantons) is the main funding body for just over half (2020).¹⁴ The private sector acts as a kind of guarantor, as public funds are often only provided if they are matched by private funds.

Multilingualism, (non)-institutional and Lay Culture as features

The structures in the theatre sector are a special feature of Switzerland and at the same time an exemplary phenomenon for other cultural fields: an interplay of roughly 30, mainly publicly financed municipal theatres and venues of the independent scene and amateur groups, which often programme within their own language region. Amateur theatres are also examples of the special role of Lay organisations in facilitating access to and active participation in culture.

Re-allocations in the public sector

Re-allocation of public responsibilities can be observed within the public sector. For example, following a local referendum, the responsibility for the Zurich Opera House was transferred from the City to the Canton of Zurich in 1994. Voluntary agreements were made with neighbouring cantons to provide resources for the upkeep of the Opera House. Such inter-cantonal cultural expenditure agreements exist between cantons serving as cultural centres and neighbouring cantons.

¹⁴ Federal Statistical Office: *Museen: Struktur und Finanzierung* (observed period: 2015-2020).

4.2 Data on selected public and private cultural institutions

Table 1a: Cultural institutions, by sector and domain

Domain	Cultural Institution (Subdomain)	Number (YEAR, latest available data)	Number (YEAR, - 5 years)
Cultural Heritage	<i>Cultural heritage sites</i>	≈ 3400 (2021) ^{1, 15}	<i>n.a.</i>
	<i>Archaeological sites</i>	38 804 (2016) ²	
Museums	<i>Museum institutions</i>	1'053 (2020) ³	1'130 (2015) ³
	<i>Art museums</i>	159 (2020) ³	171 (2015) ³
Performing arts	<i>Theatre houses (prof. theatre)</i>	78 (est.; 2020) ^{SBV}	
	<i>Professional Ballet companies</i>	4 (2020) ^{BAL}	
	<i>Professional Dance companies</i>	≈ 300 (2020) ^{DAN}	
	<i>Theatres with its own dance ensemble</i>	6 (2020) ^{DAN}	
	<i>Orchestras (full-time; classical music)</i>	13 (2020) ^{ORC}	
	<i>Orchestras</i>	≈ 200 (40 youth orchestras) (2020) ^{ORC2}	
Libraries	<i>Libraries</i>	>1499 (2020) ⁴	
Audiovisual	<i>Cinemas (venues)</i>	257 (2021) ⁵	278 (2016) ⁵
	<i>Cinemas (auditoriums)</i>	603 (2021) ⁵	575 (2016) ⁵

Sources: 1 Federal Office for Civil Protection FOCP: *Protection of cultural property inventory with objects of national importance*, GIS with the PCP inventory 2021 available at:

https://map.geo.admin.ch/?topic=kgs&lang=en&bgLayer=ch.swisstopo.pixelkarte-farbe&layers=ch.babs.kulturgueter&layers_opacity=0.75&catalogNodes=363

2,3,4,5 Federal Statistical Office.

^{ORC} Federal Office of Culture: [Culture in Switzerland - Pocket Statistics \(2020\)](#)

^{ORC2} The exact number of orchestras is unknown. Est. based on number of member orchestras of [Swiss Federal Association of Orchestras, EO.V.](#)

^{SBV} Est. based on number of members *Schweizerischer Bühnenverband SBV (Union of Swiss Theatres UST)*.

^{HAN} Est. based on data from [Reso - Dance Network Switzerland](#)

^{BAL} with classical and neo-classical repertoire: the Zurich Ballet, the Ballet Basel, the Ballet Béjart in Lausanne and the Ballet du Grand Théâtre de Genève.

¹⁵ objects categorised as cultural property of national importance ("A-Objekte"): individual buildings, collections in museums, archives and libraries and archaeological objects.

5. Cultural Funding

5.1 Overview

Public funding of culture in Switzerland is strongly shaped by federalism. The highest expenditures are made by the municipalities ($\approx 50\%$), followed by the cantons ($\approx 40\%$) and finally the federal government ($\approx 10\%$).¹⁶

Since 2008, public funding for culture has steadily increased (with the exception of 2017). In 2019, public cultural expenditure in Switzerland amounted to around CHF 3 billion. Of this, 1.48 billion was spent by the municipalities (3.4% of total municipal expenditure), 1.2 billion by the cantons (1.8% of total cantonal expenditure) and 336.7 million by the federal government (0.5% of total federal expenditure). The cantons' expenditure also includes the financial contributions of the lottery companies, which play an important role in Swiss cultural funding.

Public cultural expenditure per capita in 2019 (CHF 352) was higher than in 2014 (CHF 346). In both years, it was equivalent to 0.42% of GDP. The share of cultural expenditure in the total expenditure of the public sector rose from 1.6% (2009) to 1.7% (2019).

Private funding

Private players such as foundations play a significant role in the Swiss cultural sector when compared to other European countries. According to SwissFoundations, there are six times more foundations per capita in Switzerland than in the USA or Germany, more than 13 000 charitable foundations with total assets of just under CHF 100 billion.¹⁷ Around a quarter of all Swiss foundations support cultural projects, with up to half a billion CHF per annum.

In addition to foundations, private companies support culture in the amount of approximately 370 million CHF annually, with sponsoring accounting for about 50 per cent of the total amount (data from 2003).¹⁸ One of the country's most important private promoters of culture is Migros, Switzerland's largest retail company, which – in simple terms – dedicates one per cent of its turnover to cultural purposes.¹⁹ The importance of the private sector's commitment to the Swiss cultural landscape is also evident in the museum sector, whose anchoring in private and local structures gives museums additional legitimacy. According to

¹⁶ Source and further data by the Federal Statistical Office on public funding of culture: <https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/de/home/statistiken/kultur-medien-informationsgesellschaft-sport/kultur/kulturfinanzierung/oeffentliche.html#537282215>

¹⁷ https://www.swissfoundations.ch/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Stiftungsreport-2020_D_Web.pdf

¹⁸ Federal Statistical Office: *Kulturfinanzierung durch die Unternehmen*, Neuchâtel 2003, p. 32ff.

¹⁹ <http://www.kulturprozent.ch>

the FOC²⁰, the main funding bodies of Swiss museums are evenly distributed between public and private actors.

The data on the quantitative share of the private sector in the total volume of cultural promotion is insufficient: according to estimates, approximately every sixth to seventh CHF for cultural promotion comes from the private sector.²¹ A study (sample survey) on cultural policy in selected German-speaking cantons, in the period from 2008 to 2018, showed only minor shifts over time in the financing structure of institutions and projects: the share of public funding for supported cultural institutions was between 40 and 47 per cent, and between 33 and 40 per cent for projects.²²

5.2 Public cultural expenditure by level of government

Table 2: Public cultural expenditure by level of government, in CHF and in EUR, 2019/2014

Level of government	Total cultural expenditure 2019			Total cultural expenditure 2014		
	in CHF, in mio*	in EUR, in mio*	% share of total	in CHF, in mio*	in EUR, in mio*	% share of total
Confederation	336.7	302.65	11.2	300.1	247.08	10.6
Cantons	1 197.8	1 076.67	39.7	1 131.4	931.50	40
Municipalities	1 484.4	1 334.29	49.2	1 400.1	1 152.73	49.4
TOTAL	3 018.9	2 713.62	100	2 831.5	2 331.22	100%

Source: Federal Statistical Office: *Kulturfinanzierung durch die öffentliche Hand* (2021); SNB Foreign exchange rates – Year

Note: * At the date of expenditure

²⁰ Federal Office of Culture: [Culture in Switzerland - Pocket Statistics \(2020\)](#).

²¹ Keller, Rolf: *Kulturpolitik der Schweiz*. In: Kompendium Kulturmanagement. Verlag Franz Vahlen, 2011, p. 130.

²² Schwenkel, Christof; Ritz, Manuel; Stamm, Mélanie; La Mantia, Alexandra: [Entwicklungen in der Kulturförderung in der Ostschweiz und im Fürstentum Liechtenstein seit 2008](#), Interface Politikstudien Forschung Beratung, Luzern, 2020.

5.3 Public cultural expenditure per sector

Table 3: Public cultural expenditure by sector, in CHF and in EUR, 2019/2014

Field / Domain	Total cultural expenditure 2019			Total cultural expenditure 2014		
	in mio CHF	in mio EUR*	% share of total	in mio CHF	in mio EUR*	% share of total
Cultural heritage**	297.4	267.33	9.9	264.4	217.68	9.3
Museums and visual arts	601.2	540.40	19.9	567.8	467.48	20.1
Music & Theatre	824.3	740.94	27.3	729.3	600.44	25.8
Libraries and literature	395.4	355.42	13.1	367.9	302.90	13.0
Film and cinema	83.8	75.33	2.8	65.6	54.01	2.3
Mass media	127.0	114.16	4.2	140.2	115.43	5.0
General cultural funding	688.0	618.43	22.8	695.1	572.29	24.5
R&D in culture and media	1.7	1.53	0.1	1.2	0.99	0.04
TOTAL	3 018.9	2 713.62	100%	2 831.5	2 331.22	100%

Source: Federal Statistical Office: *Kulturfinanzierung durch die öffentliche Hand - nach Kulturbereichen* (2021); SNB Foreign exchange rates – Year

**classification: Preservation of historical monuments and cultural heritage (Code 312), available at: <https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/en/home/statistics/catalogues-databases.assetdetail.do-d-16.02.05-2012-01.html>

6. Legislation on culture

6.1 Overview of national cultural legislation

In the area of cultural promotion, the Confederation has parallel, subsidiary and compensatory competences. A range of laws, decrees, and regulations exist at the cantonal and municipal levels. At the federal level, the legal basis for cultural activities was for a long time an unwritten cultural competence of the Federal Constitution.²³ From the end of the 1950s onwards, the first provisions on culture, limited to certain subject areas, found their way into the Constitution.

With the "total revision" of the Swiss Federal Constitution in 1999, the support of culture - outside of specific areas such as film or nature and heritage conservation - was given an explicit constitutional basis for the first time (Art. 69 BV). To implement this so-called "cultural article" of the Constitution, a [Federal Law on the Promotion of Culture \(LEC\)](#) was developed and adopted by the Federal Parliament in 2009 (in force since 2012). The following concrete aims are associated therewith:

- the responsibilities of the Confederation toward the cantons, communes, and cities, which are primarily responsible for the promotion of culture, are subject to precise delimitation
- the division of tasks between the federal authorities responsible for the promotion of culture (FOC, PH, FDFA) are subject to clear regulation
- the cultural policy guidelines of the Confederation are determined
- the FOC is given new tasks in the area of promoting musical education and preserving cultural heritage
- the organisation of the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia is being modernised
- four-year payment frameworks are adopted to steer the Confederation's funding of culture.

Federal cultural law is based on several federal acts and numerous ordinances:

- Federal Act of 11 December 2009 on the Promotion of Culture (Culture Promotion Act, KFG - SR 442.1)
- Federal Act on Federal Museums and Collections (SR 432.30)
- Federal Act on the International Transfer of Cultural Property (KGTG; SR 441.1)
- Federal Act on Film Production and Film Culture (Film Act, FiA; SR 443.1)
- Federal Act on the National Languages and Communication between the Language Communities (Language Act, SpG; SR 441.1)

²³ see André Briel/Oliver Waespi/Daniel Zimmermann: *Kulturrecht des Bundes*, in: Ehrenzeller, Bernhard. Schweizerisches Bundesverwaltungsrecht, Bildungs-, Kultur- und Sprachenrecht. Vol. 9. Helbing Lichtenhahn Verlag, 2018, pp. 582 ff.

- Federal Act on the Swiss National Library (National Library Act, NBibG; SR 432.21)
- Nature and Cultural Heritage Act and Ordinance (NCHA); SR 451
- Federal Act on Radio and Television (RTVA) of 21st June 1991
- Radio and Television Ordinance of 6th October 1997 (RTVO)
- Ordinance of 23 November 2011 on the Promotion of Culture (Culture Promotion Ordinance, KfV)
- Ordinance of 4 June 2010 on the National Languages and Communication between the Language Communities (Language Ordinance, SpV)
- Ordinance of the FDHA on the Promotion Concept for Strengthening Cultural Participation of 29 October 2020
- Ordinance of the FDHA on the Promotion Concept for the Support of Organisations of Professional Cultural Workers of 5 July 2016
- Ordinance of the FDHA on the Funding Concept for the Support of Organisations of Non-professional Cultural Workers of 5 July 2016
- Ordinance of the FDHA on the Promotion Concept for the Promotion of Reading of 5 July 2016
- Ordinance of the FDHA on the Promotion Concept for the Promotion of Publishing of 13 March 2020
- Ordinance of the FDHA on the Funding Concept for the Support of Museums, Collections and Networks of Third Parties for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage of 29 November 2016
- Ordinance of the FDHA on the Funding Concept for the Promotion of Music Education of 29 November 2016
- Ordinance of the FDHA on the Funding Concept for Swiss Prizes, Swiss Grand Prix and Purchases of 6 May 2016
- Ordinance of the FDHA on the Funding Concept for the Support of Cultural Events and Projects of 29 October 2020
- Ordinance of the FDHA of 29 October 2020 on the Funding Concept for the "youth+music" programme
- Rules of Procedure of 22 October 2020 of the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia Foundation
- Ordinance of the Board of Trustees of the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia Foundation of 22 October 2020 on its contributions (Pro Helvetia Contributions Ordinance)
- Ordinance of 27 October 2011 of the Board of Trustees of the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia Foundation on the staff of the Pro Helvetia Foundation (Pro Helvetia Staff Ordinance)
- Ordinance of 14 October 2020 on measures in the area of culture pursuant to the Covid-19 Act (Covid-19 Culture Ordinance)

Recent developments

Measures relating to the cultural sector in the COVID-19 Act: The duration of measures to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in the cultural sector has been extended until the end of June 2022 and the end of 2022 respectively. The legal basis is [Article 11 of the COVID-19 Act](#), which is concretised in the [COVID-19-Culture Ordinance](#).

Revision of the Film Act (FiA): In 2022, the Swiss people approved the introduction of an investment obligation of 4% of gross revenues generated in Switzerland in Swiss filmmaking for streaming providers. The revised Film Act also sets a new 30% quota of European films on streaming platforms.

6.2 Overview of international cultural legislation

Switzerland is a member of many **international conventions**, including:

- Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (Implemented through the Federal Act on the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, Disaster and Emergency (KGSG))
- UNESCO World Heritage Convention (WCW); Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (implemented through the Federal Act on the Protection of Nature and Cultural Heritage (NCHA))
- UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (implemented through the Cultural Property Transfer Act, CPTA)
- UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (implemented through the Culture Promotion Act/Kulturförderungsgesetz KFG)
- UNESCO Convention on the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (implemented through the Culture Promotion Act/Kulturförderungsgesetz KFG)
- UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage (implemented through the Cultural Property Transfer Act, CPTA)
- Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (1985) (Granada Convention)
- Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (1992) (Malta Convention)
- Council of Europe Landscape Convention
- Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities
- Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society
- Council of Europe Convention on Cinematographic Co-production (revised)