

"EMPOWERMENT  
OF SOCIAL INCLUSION GROUPS THROUGH  
CREATIVITY AND CULTURAL WORKS"  
2020-1-CZ01-KA227-ADV-094406

## CURRENT SITUATION AND EXISTING GOOD PRACTICES IN CREATIVE AND CULTURAL SECTOR



## COUNTRY REPORT - ROMANIA



ASOCIAȚIA  
MERGI ÎNAINTE



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## ABSTRACT

The current report is prepared as a result of the **PALKonnect** experts work and on the desk research of the experts of AHEAD Association. The aim of the report is to summarize the current situation of the cultural and creative sector in Romania in the post-COVID 19 period and to present several good practices and examples connected with supporting of emerging artists from social inclusion groups.

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## HOW TO READ THIS REPORT?

This report is divided into five sections. The Introduction contains the introduction to the main characteristics and sectors development in the country. The next section provides detailed findings about current situation of the cultural sector in the post-COVID period. Section three is presenting the measures and support at local and national level. The next section is concluding the major good practices and initiatives. We are closing the paper with a list of the used resources.

This document has been prepared as part of project **"Empowerment of social inclusion groups through creativity and cultural works"** with reference number **2020-1-CZ01-KA227-ADU-094406**.

### Intellectual Output 1 "Supporting Artists from social inclusion groups", 08/2021

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## Cultural and Creative Sector in ROMANIA: main characteristics and sectors development

In Romania, the cultural and creative sectors are not as supported as other sectors. Although there are a number of laws designed for certain segments of the cultural and creative industry, it has not yet reached a high level of development. This field started to develop more in Romania starting with 2014 when the government noticed a huge economic potential. Thus, within the cultural and creative industry in Romania we can find independent artists and companies, some benefiting from a series of different regulations having access to sources of public funding, while others develop in accordance with generally applicable laws. Law no. 350/2005 from the system of free financing of public funds offers to the applicant, meaning natural or legal persons without patrimonial purpose who submit a project proposal, a sum of money. At the same time, in 2017, following a government meeting, a memorandum was adopted supporting the economic potential of Romania's cultural and creative sector. Experts from the Ministry of Business Environment, Trade and Entrepreneurship and the Ministry of Culture and National Identity drafted this document. The memorandum aims to support the cultural and creative sectors in Romania, creating an indispensable institutional framework. A number of fiscal stimulus measures and clear provisions in the field of public procurement have been developed, as well as measures regarding the protection of intellectual property. Also, the aim was to inform the local public authorities about this field, but also to implement the already existing European initiatives. The document also included a series of recommendations on improving and optimizing access to free financing for companies and individuals in need.

### The public sector

*The White Paper for Activating the Economic Potential of the cultural and creative sectors in Romania* defines the Cultural and Creative Sectors in specific subdomains:

- Libraries and archives;
- Cultural heritage;

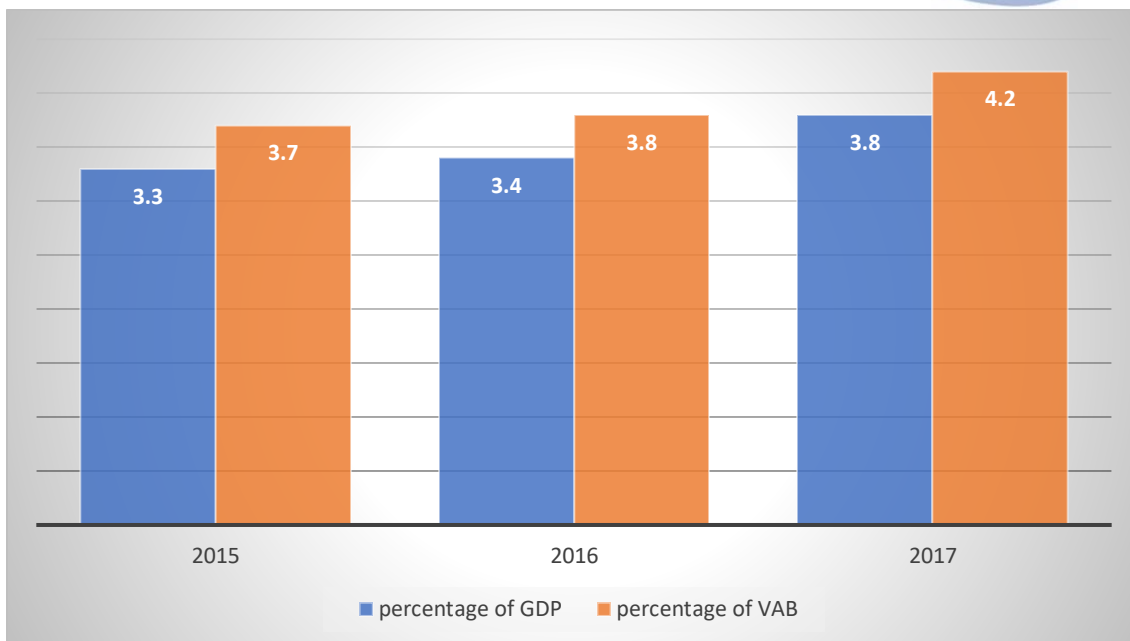
- Crafts and handicrafts (include non-industrial cultural and artistic activities and are grouped in the common phrase of culture and arts);
- Performing arts;
- Visual arts;
- Book and press (aimed at cultural expression);
- Architecture;
- Audiovisual and multimedia;
- Advertising (subdomain oriented towards the principle of functionality framed in the cultural dimension);
- IT, software and electronic games;
- Research and development, these are considered cross-cutting sectors that are based on innovation and creativity, are oriented towards innovation, but are used especially as a support for other subdomains.

In 2019, the National Institute for Cultural Research and Training carried out an *Economic Analysis of the creative sectors for the period 2015-2018* , thus obtaining a series of results that show where the Creative and Cultural Sectors in Romania are economically and socially before the crisis generated by the COVID- 19 virus.

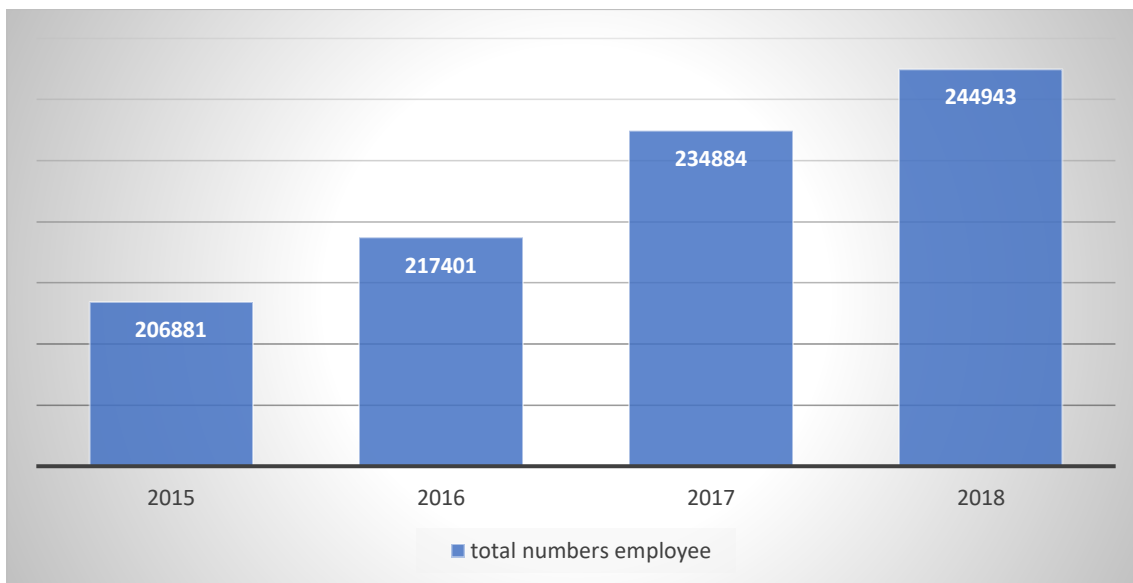
The analysis shows the upward trend for all researched sections, for the period 2015 - 2018.

We mention that the analysis was performed based on the financial data of the companies registered in the National Office of the Trade Register and does not include the category of Authorized Individuals who carry out their activity in the Cultural and Creative Sectors.

Economic contribution of the Cultural and Creative Sectors to national GDP (Gross Domestic Product) and GVA (Gross Value Added):



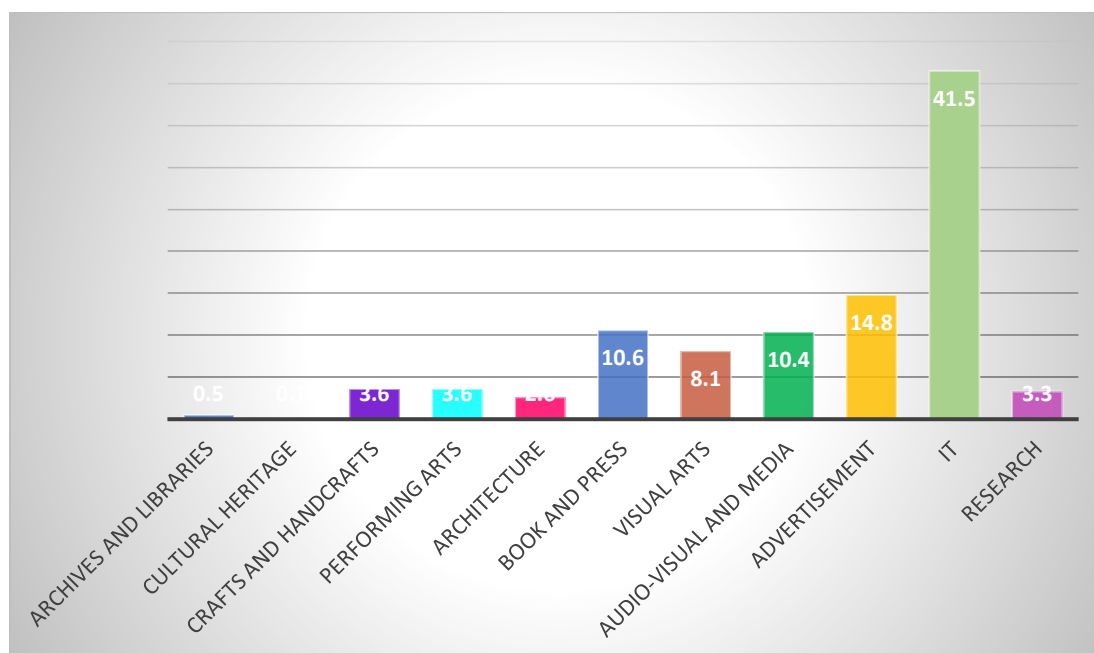
Total number of employees of commercial companies in the Cultural and Creative Sectors:



Employment in the Cultural and Creative Sectors compared to the national economy:

	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>SCC employees</b>	206.881	217.401	234.884	244.943
<b>TOTAL NATIONAL employees</b>	4.611.395	4.759.419	4.945.868	5.068.063
<b>% SCC/NATIONAL</b>	4,5	4,6	4,7	4,8

Turnover by SCC sectors in 2018 (in percentages):



Data on the situation of the cultural and creative industry was also provided by the National Institute of Statistics, which centralized data from public institutions and private companies, so in 2020 the number of units that organized concerts and shows decreased from 175 in 2019 to 167 in 2020. Also in the context of the pandemic (2020) were organized only 10,000 shows and concerts attended by 1.5 million spectators compared to 26,400



performances, watched by 8.1 million spectators in 2019. The most visitors were recorded in theaters - 54.8%, and the performances supported by the popular orchestra, artistic ensembles, dance and entertainment bands - 16.7%.

The National Institute of Statistics also provides data about the books read by Romanians. Thus, in 2020 there were 8829 libraries, 393 less than in 2019. 158 million volumes were made available to the public, 2.5 million less than in 2019. The number of volumes released to users in 2020 was 12, 7 million less than 2019. Under the conditions imposed by the pandemic, when the population frequented less public libraries, a user borrowed an average of 11.3 volumes, compared to the previous year when he borrowed 13.7 volumes.

The same institution also provides us with data on the number of museum visitors.

Thus, the Network of museums and public collections included in 2020, 438 units, compared to 461 in 2019.

Cultural exhibits reducing from 269 thousand, reaching 33.5 million in 2020, due to the restriction of activity or the temporary closure of some museums. The number of museum visitors and public collections, botanical gardens, zoos, aquariums and nature reserves, recorded in 2020, was 7.9 million people, representing less than half of the number of visitors in 2019.

The data of the National Institute of Statistics show that the number of online publications has increased, so in 2020 there were 531 units with publishing activities, 18 more than in 2019.

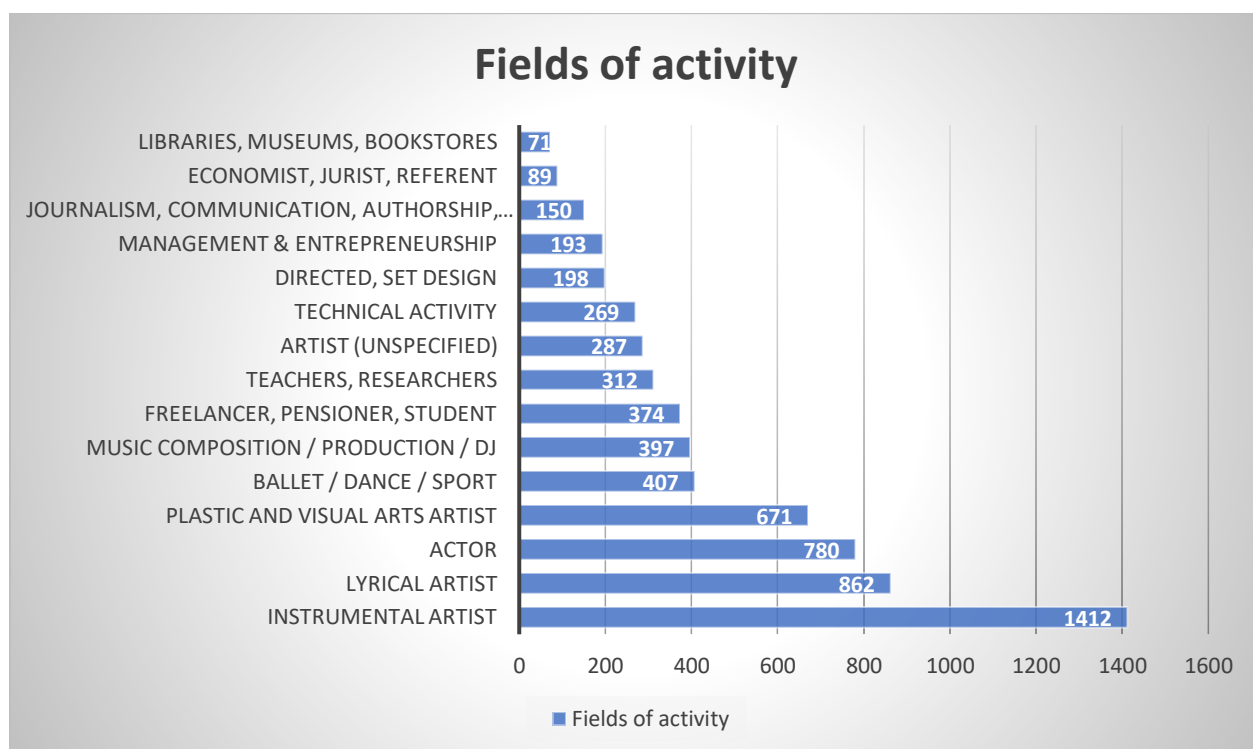
According to the same source, the national production of films for the big screen, in 2020, included 41 films (30 feature films, 8 documentaries and 3 animation films), with 13 less than in 2019.

"Under the circumstances of the pandemic in 2020, the cinematographic projection included 210.5 thousand shows (one third compared to 2019), watched by 3.3 million spectators (compared to 13.1 million spectators in 2019)", shows the National Institute of Statistics in Romania.

## The private sector

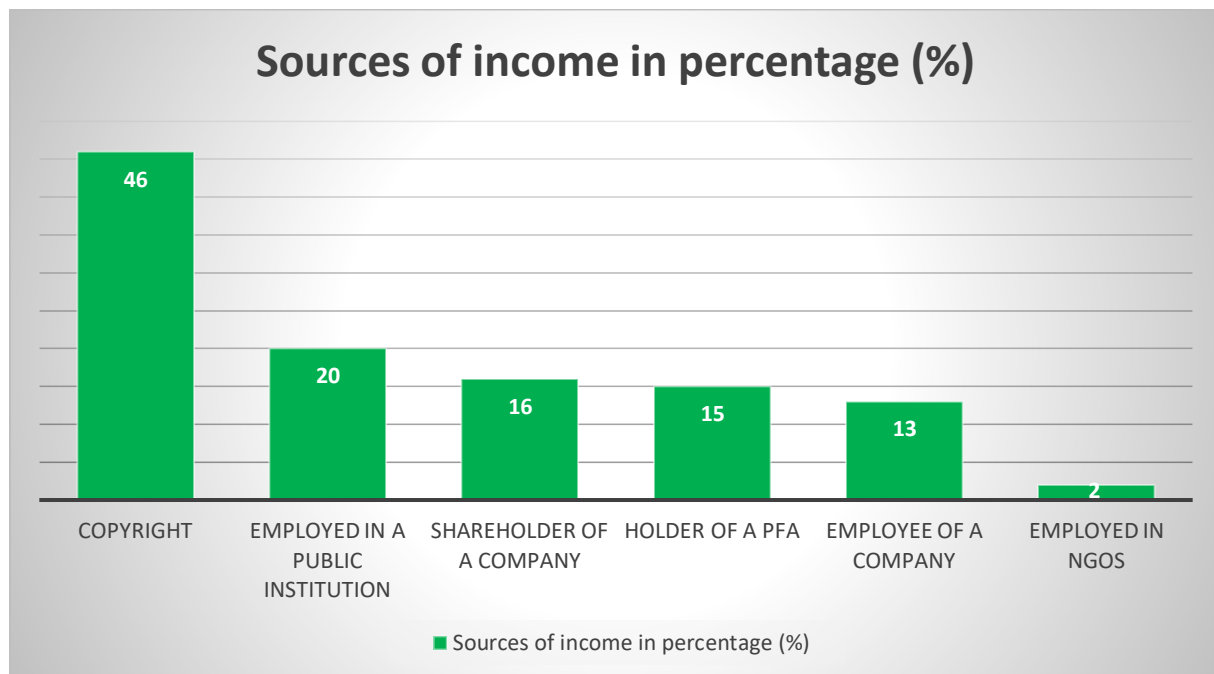
In 2020, the National Institute for Cultural Research and Training continued the research on the cultural and creative sector, including information about the private units that deliver cultural creation. Thus, information was obtained from non-governmental organizations, companies and individuals active in the cultural field.

In 2020, 6606 individuals were registered in the Cultural Sector Register, grouped in different fields of activity.





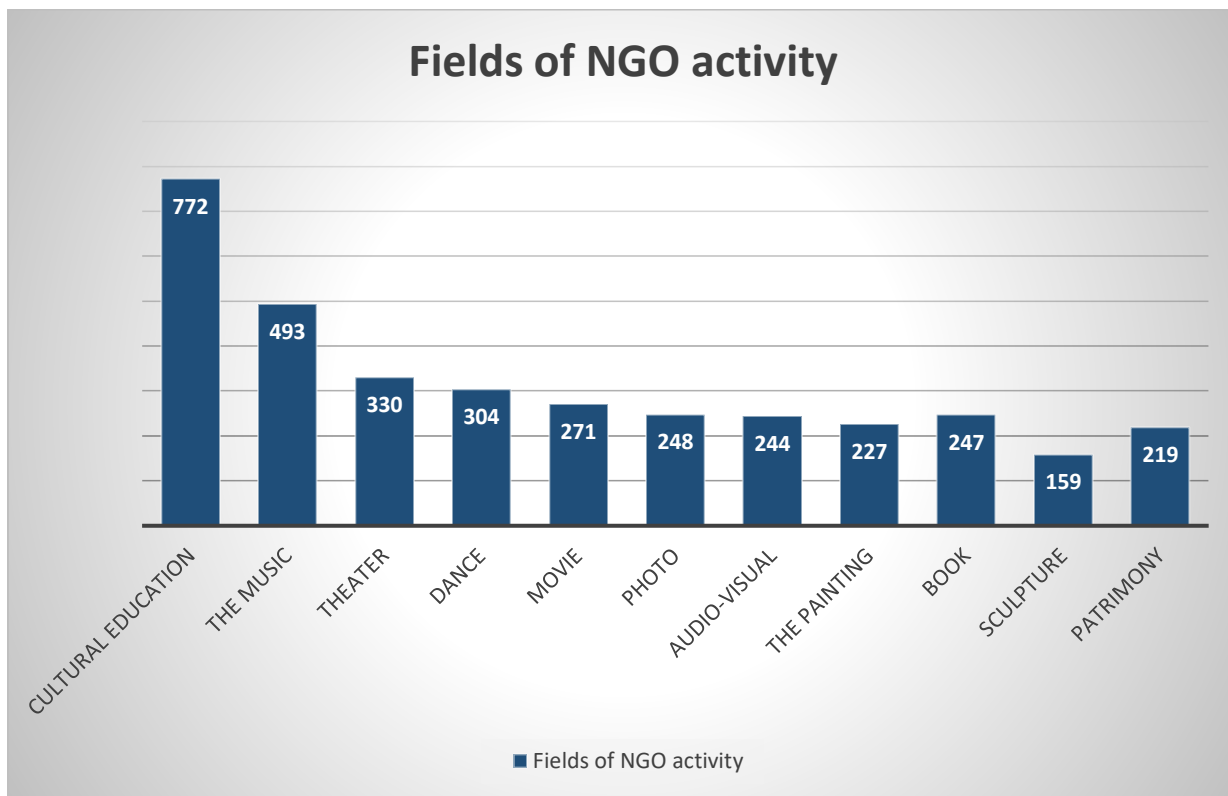
## Sources of income of active individuals



In 2020, 1179 **non-governmental organizations** were registered in the Cultural Sector Register.

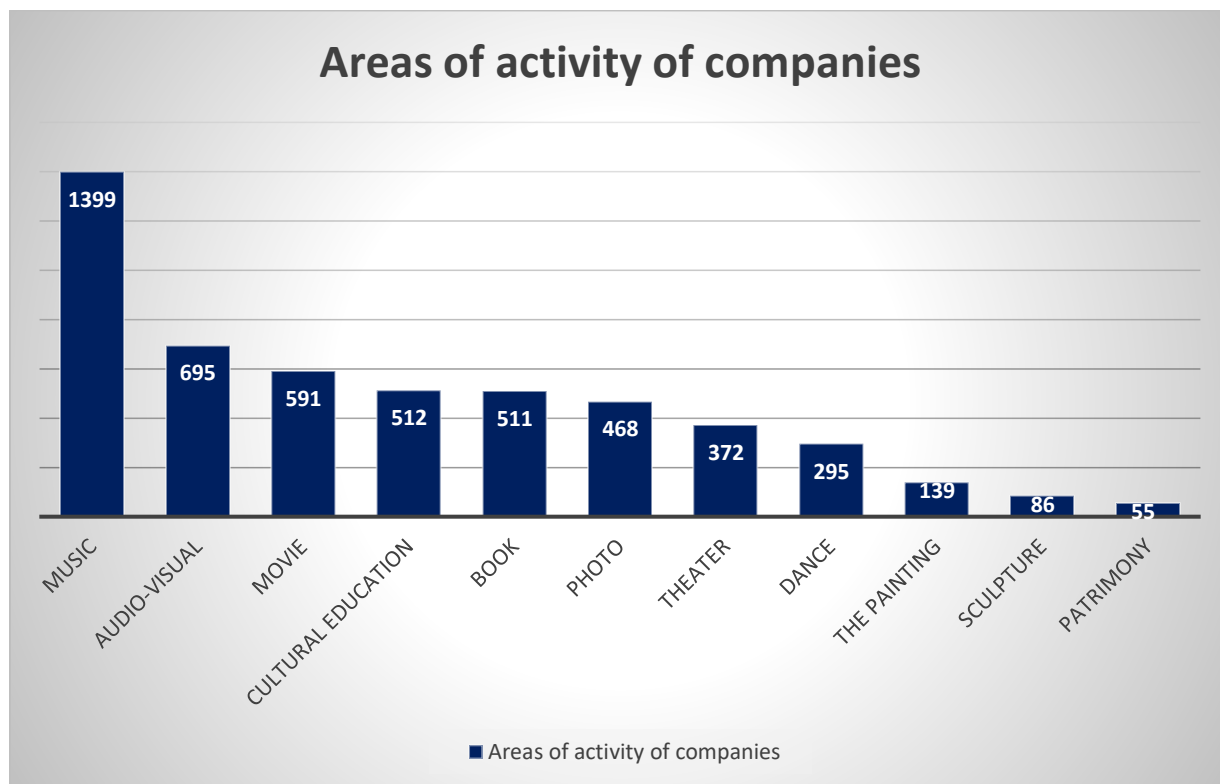
According to an update also made by the National Institute for Cultural Research and Training in January 2021, in Romania were identified a number of 5293 non-governmental organizations operating in the area of cultural and creative sector, and a number of 1360, respectively 26% were inactive.

## Fields of activity of non-governmental organizations



In 2020, 3135 **companies** were registered in the Cultural Sector Register, carrying out activities in the cultural creation industry.

## Areas of activity of cultural societies



## Current situation of the cultural sector in the post-COVID period

The COVID-19 pandemic affected the Cultural and Creative Sector from a financial point of view and showed the weak capacity of this industry to adapt and survive, due to the restrictions imposed, respectively the cancellation and suspension of all events held in physical spaces. The crisis generated by the virus has brought changes in the demand and supply of cultural products.

At present, the cultural creation sector is in an unprecedented situation. Thus, if in recent years, the creative industry has contributed to the growth in the Gross Domestic Product exponentially, and in the pandemic has provided cultural products that have improved the mental comfort of the population, it will take a much longer period until its complete recovery, because it is considered a sector with less importance.

## Measures and support at local and national level

The areas of social and economic life have been unprecedentedly affected globally. As everywhere in the world, in Romania, there were taken measures that aimed the social distancing, and this led to the prohibition of most activities carried out in the creative and cultural industry. This has led to the bankruptcy of some small and medium enterprises, and implicitly to unemployment.

In this situation, following some civic or individual actions, the Government initiated a series of measures, which aimed at supporting the cultural and creative sector, from a financial point of view.

In this circumstances, the Government emergency ordinance, no. 29 which includes economic and fiscal-financial measures with an impact on the cultural sector and the implementation of a multiannual program to support SMEs, to reduce the effects of the COVID-19 virus, by guaranteeing loans and subsidizing interest on these loans, and small and medium-sized companies, who have totally or partially interrupted their activity based on the decisions issued by the public authorities, during the state of emergency, if they hold the emergency certificate issued by the Ministry of Economy, benefit from the deferral of payment for utility services, electricity, natural gas, water, telephone and internet services, as well as the deferral of payment of rent for the building intended for the registered office and secondary offices.

Also on March 18, 2020, the Government developed the Emergency Ordinance, no. 30 which regulates:

- The method of granting technical unemployment in the case of LLCs and NGOs that temporarily suspend the employment contract. Thus, employees receive a state-subsidized allowance of 75% of salary, but not more than 75% of the average gross salary per economy
- Ensuring an allowance equal to the minimum gross wage per economy for authorized individuals and individual enterprises in the cultural and creative sector.

Also in March 2020, the Administration of the National Cultural Fund announces that it keeps open the call for the second financing session of 2020, precisely to support cultural operators in the context of the aggravation of the crisis caused by Covid-19. Moreover, some of the public cultural institutions ( National Dance Center , National Heritage Institute , Clujean Cultural Center, ASTRA Sibiu National Museum Complex , Studio M Theater in Sfântu Gheorghe) announce that they will not participate in this funding session to show their solidarity with independent cultural operators, whose resources have been drastically diminished.

During the same period, the Government developed the Emergency Ordinance, no. 32 / 26.03.2020, following consultations between the Ministry of Culture and the independent cultural sector. The ordinance stipulates that individuals who obtain income exclusively from copyright and related rights, according to the regulations in force, will receive an allowance equal to 75% of the average gross salary per country guaranteed from the general budget consolidated by the County Agencies for Payments and Social Inspection or Agency for Payments and Social Inspection of Bucharest. The persons concerned must not obtain income from other activities and must declare on their own responsibility that they are unable to carry out their activity on the basis of decisions issued by the competent public authorities according to law, during the state of emergency established.

Also at the beginning of the state of emergency, the Ministry of Culture launched the ACCES Online 2020 financing project, dedicated exclusively to the private sector, as a tool for financial support of cultural projects that have the capacity to be disseminated exclusively online. The project was designed especially to help artists who during this period can no longer carry out their artistic activities with the public. For this reason, the Ministry of Culture has decided that, by 2020, the annual financing session through the ACCES Program will be dedicated to cultural operators in the independent area. The projects submitted within the ACCES Online 2020 program must fall into the fields: theater, music, dance, visual arts, intangible heritage. The

amount allocated for financing the selection session is 1,000,000 lei. The maximum amount that can be requested for a cultural project / action is 50,000 lei.

After consultations and rounds of meetings organized at Government level, in 2020, with representatives of the cultural sector, under the coordination of the Deputy Prime Minister, the Ministry of Culture centralized and analyzed the proposals and developed a financial support package aimed at relaunching the cultural activity of approximately 5,700 of beneficiaries:

1. Minimis aid scheme , dedicated exclusively to the independent cultural sector in Romania, offers the possibility of professionals (artists, musicians and other cultural operators registered as NGOs or LLCs) to access a non-reimbursable fixed micro-grant of 8,000 euros to help them continue in the cultural field in which they operate;
2. The state aid scheme includes 4 types of grants and comes to financially support cultural events, festivals, bookstores and publishing houses severely affected by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The money will be allocated for future projects, and the value of the grants will be determined by the number of tickets or books sold by each cultural operator in 2019.

In terms of financial allocations for the two schemes, the independent cultural sector will benefit from about 60% of the total amount allocated, cultural events and festivals about 20%, and bookstores and publishing houses the remaining 20%.

Also in order to support the cultural operators affected by the measures and restrictions imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry of Culture also adopted a series of specific measures:

- Postponement of the payment of installments to banks during 2020 with the possibility of extension until 01.10.2021, in the case of entities operating in the cultural sector.
- Postponement of the reimbursement of the ticket price for the events that did not take place in 2020.



- At the initiative of the Ministry of Culture, 167 works signed by 100 contemporary Romanian artists were purchased by the National Museum of Contemporary Art.

*"In April, at a critical time for Romanian artists affected by the restrictions imposed by the pandemic, we proposed funding a program for the acquisition of contemporary art. It is an investment of the Romanian state in Romanian artists. This economic measure aimed at supporting the Romanian plastic creation and enriching the museum patrimony (...) ", declared the Minister of Culture, Bogdan Gheorghiu.*

## **Good practices and initiatives working at local and national level supporting the emerging artists from social inclusion groups**

### **1. TAM TAM Festival**

Between August 13 and 15, 2021, the third edition of the TAM TAM Art To Heart Festival took place in Brasov, which transformed the city center into a huge cultural scene. The festival was sponsored by the County Council and Brasov City Hall. During 3 days, the Brasov public could watch on the stages arranged in squares and parks, a series of music, theater, film, dance and visual arts performances. It should be mentioned that in 2020, in the middle of the pandemic, the second edition was organized, attended by 350 artists and over 60,000 spectators, the organizers received a certificate of "Covid safe" offered by Dekra Romania Company.

The organizers set out to continue the process of cultural and social emancipation of the city, to educate a new audience through programs that, although diverse in approach and content, are cohesive in a coherent concept that will take into account all ongoing restrictions of the pandemic.

The 2021 edition was attended by over 300 artists in over 96 events and performances on 6 stages arranged in the Old Center of Brasov.

## 2. The biggest film festival in Romania

For 20 years, the largest film festival in Romania has been taking place in Cluj Napoca, this year, due to the conditions imposed against the spread of the COVID 19 virus, all the activities took place outdoors. For this, the organizers sought to find places to accommodate as many spectators as possible, they turned to principals of schools and colleges, to bishops who have experience in organizing outdoor events. It was also requested the collaboration with a company of surveyors who measured the areas where the film projections were to be arranged. Spaces were identified where they fit the maximum allowed limit - 500 spectators on chairs grouped by one or two with a distance of 1.5 meters between them, also at the entrance the temperature was measured and wearing a mask was mandatory.

## 3. Art Encounters Biennial 2021

The ART ENCOUNTERS Foundation organized in Timisoara, between 1st and 3rd October, 2021, an important art event called OUR OTHER US: BIENNIAL ART ENCOUNTERS 2021. The exhibition presented plastic creations of over 100 Romanian and foreign artists. We mention that the city of Timisoara was designated the European Capital of Culture in 2021, along with other cities in Europe, and due to pandemic reasons, a series of activities were postponed for the following years.

The Art Encounters 2021 Biennial was organized in hybrid format, some of the activities taking place online. The general public was able to participate in exhibitions arranged in spaces offered by museums and art galleries in the city, in compliance with the conditions imposed by the authorities, so the entrance was possible based on the vaccination certificate, with mandatory wearing a mask and keeping a protective distance between visitors.

#### 4. The Independent Theater Marathon

The Apropos Theater in Bucharest, together with other partner theaters, organized starting with October 13th, 2021 a number of 20 performances that were also broadcast online on the cultural platform [www.bfringe.ro](http://www.bfringe.ro). The edition also included performances that focused on dance. Two presentation formulas were used: shows with restricted audiences and live streaming.

Organizer Radu Popescu states that "the goal for this year is to give back to the independent creators the joy of being together, of communicating and of resuming the living connection with the public"

According to the organizers, the access to the Live performances is made only on the basis of a green validation certificate attesting the vaccination or passing through the disease, and the maximum allowed capacity is 50% of the total seats of the performance hall.

#### 5. Museum night

The Night of Museums 2021, the 17th edition, took place on Saturday, June 12, nationwide. Exhibitions, interventions and artistic experiments, screenings, shows, workshops, concerts or interactive tours were organized, as well as online events. For the first time, exhibitions were visited at the Pandemic Museum and the Collectivization Museum.

Museum Night activities were offered to culture lovers by museums and memorial houses, art galleries, cultural institutes, creative salons and studios, castles, palaces, cities, mills, theaters, universities, cinemas, libraries, communist terror memorials, athenaeums, operas, philharmonics, places of worship and houses of experiments.

185 cultural spaces from 72 localities, from 37 counties of the country were used. Of these, 43 cultural points of interest in Bucharest, where the public enjoyed a series of unique and interactive artistic and cultural interventions.

All the events proposed in the Night of Museums took place in compliance with the legislation in force on the prevention of COVID-19.

## 6. E-Theatrum platform

Quantum Media Creative manages an original idea, which comes in support of culture consumers. On the digital online theater platform you can watch over 100 theater performances. Besides theater, the platform also includes shows, stories and shows for children. Access to the platform can be done by purchasing a subscription of 7 euros per month. Watching can be done from any media device.

## 7. Brasov International Biennial of Visual Arts 2021 - Essentia

Known as the *Blue Biennale* - the event creates a cultural context through which creativity expressed through visual art is stimulated locally, regionally, nationally and internationally, while promoting dialogue between the arts through exhibitions, dialogue between participants, guests, cultural actors and the general audience.

The 2nd edition of the International Biennial of Visual Arts in Brasov - Blue Biennial has as its theme the return after the period full of challenges and restrictions we went through due to the pandemic, to what is fundamental in life and everything that is essential.

The Artessentia Association wanted to build a visible event that would capitalize on the creations of visual artists from various backgrounds (painting, sculpture, graphics, textile art, ceramics, glass, metal, collage, photography, video art, installation, visual experiment, performance - art, happening, mapping, mixed media, etc. )

Because the global health situation has forced the adaptation to new forms of connecting the arts with the public, the 2021 Biennial took place in a hybrid format, a series of cultural events held online being designed, watching the Biennial exhibitions in virtual tour format through social media but also by organizing guided tours.

The Visual Arts Biennial was not limited to the plastic arts environment, but addressed the entire cultural segment through cultural intervention actions related to exhibitions: classical music concerts, jazz and electronic music, theatrical performances, contemporary dance, open lessons for students, meetings with visual artists, critics and people from the cultural business environment, etc.

## 8. The Concert

In June 2021, the most popular music artists of the moment could be watched by the public from their personal cars, in a huge parking lot of a large exhibition complex in Bucharest. The artistic performances were followed by the car windshields, parked in the space of the complex. The car speakers were connected to a radio frequency, the horns took the place of the applause. What happened on the stage was watched with the help of screens located in the parking areas. The event lasted three days and three nights. The security team was numerous and made sure that those who got out of the cars wore masks and kept the appropriate distance. The technical team worked in a restricted format respecting the anti-COVID protection norms.

## 9. The Great Summer Opening

The National Museum of Contemporary Art returned to activity with the event "The Great Summer Opening" which took place in the courtyard of the Palace of the Romanian Parliament, on June 10th, 2021. The exhibition took place outdoors and allowed the participation of 500 people who watched live concerts, projections from new or old exhibitions. The access took place in small groups that followed the rules of distance. The team used electronic means to organize the event (phone, online and Zoom).

The aim was to offer the public the first major cultural event after the period full of restrictions and to show that museums are alive and exist even in times of pandemic. Another concern of the museum team was to find a solution to continue the education program. Thus, they reopened the series of guided tours and workshops for children within a partner project, *Movement and Color*, a cultural education program that addresses especially children from disadvantaged backgrounds. The first ten participants, says Călinescu, are "wiser and better prepared to respect the new safety rules than many of the adults". The little ones wore masks throughout the guided tour, and during the workshop, which took place on the museum terrace, they respected their work spaces: individual cubes, placed at a distance of 2 m from each other. "It was a lesson. The children know how to fill the two meters between them with magic. You can work with children safely. Maybe especially with children." Ioana Călinescu explains.

## 10. Young Theater Festival - Ideo Ideas

Every year in August, for 15 years, Ideo Ideas organizes in Alexandria, Teleorman a theater festival attended by teenagers from all over the country with guests from the cultural sector. Thus, theater performances, workshops, masterclasses and film screenings are organized. In 2021, the festival took place in 9 cities, between August 5th and 9th. The young participants, future theater and film actors participate in various workshops that capitalize on their potential. All activities took place in open spaces and were broadcast live on a platform dedicated specifically to the event. Spectators participated in limited numbers, respected the distance measures, wore a protective mask, were epidemiologically verified by checking their temperature, and hand disinfection.

### Resources

<https://www.ro-cultura.ro/apeluri>

<https://culturadatainteractiv.ro>

<http://mmuncii.ro/>

<https://www.scena9.ro/>

<https://bluebiennale.com/v/>

-The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Independent Creative Activities in Two Large Cities in Romania Nicolae Popa, Ana-Maria Pop, Alexandra-Camelia Marian-Potra, Pompei Ccean, Gheorghe-Gavrilă Hognogi and Nicoleta Afrodita David – Article Published on line 19 July 2021:

<https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18147674>