

Country Profile: Spain

By Interarts
Practics Infopoint – Spain

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For more information: Interarts.
Tel (+34) 934 877 022. practices@interarts.net.
www.interarts.net. www.practices.org.



This information has been adapted from the section devoted to Spain in *Cultural Policies and Trends in Europe: a Compendium of Basic Facts and Trends*. For more details, please visit: www.culturalpolicies.net.

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1. Spanish cultural policy from a historical perspective

1.1. Period of dictatorship (1939-1975)

In the first period, culture under Franco's regime was characterised by a rigid state censorship, monopolistic control on information and propaganda. Nationalism, fervent Catholic religiousness and traditional artistic styles were promoted. Authorities emphasised Spain's imperial past and suppressed cultural pluralism and regional diversity.

In the second phase of dictatorship, from the 1960s, rigorous cultural policy softened and some avant-garde projects (such as the San Sebastian film festival) were supported. Nevertheless, state policy did not keep up with cultural changes in society and the growing public demand on access to culture.

1.2. After the decline of the regime

When the first democratic government came to office, it started to reform inefficient institutions, including those in the cultural sector. In 1977, the Ministry of Culture was established and it became responsible for national heritage and the development of film, theatre, music and arts (which had up to that point been the responsibility of the Ministry of Information and Tourism). The Constitution of 1978 guaranteed press and artistic freedom, as well as recognition for cultural and linguistic diversity. Cultural infrastructure started to be developed. Already existing institutions were supported and new ones were created (National Orchestra, National Ballet, National Drama Centre, National Classical Theatre Company, etc.).

Since the early 1980s, the new democratic system was also characterised by decentralisation of competences to regional and local authorities, which were increasingly to take the lead on policy design and delivery in a wide range of areas, including cultural and educational policies.

From 1986 onwards emphasis was placed on the dissemination of culture among citizens, which often involved the development of new facilities in the cultural sector. A number of new museums and concert halls were inaugurated: the Reina Sofía Museum and Art Centre, the National Museum of

Roman Art of Merida (1986), the Concert Hall of Madrid (1988), the Valencia Institute of Modern Art and the Modern Art Centre of the Canary Islands (1989), the Festival Hall of Cantabria (1991), the Galician Centre of Contemporary Art and the Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Collection (1993), the Museum of Contemporary Art of Barcelona and the Domus Museum of La Coruña (1996).

Moreover, several international events, such as the Barcelona Olympics, the Seville Expo, the Fifth Centenary of the Discovery of America or the Madrid European Cultural Capital 1992, were held and contributed to promote Spain internationally from the cultural side as well. In 1991 the Cervantes Institute was established, which was designed to raise awareness of Spanish culture in foreign countries.

1.3. Recent times

In 1996 the Ministry of Culture merged with the Ministry of Education and a new Ministry was formed, wherein cultural affairs were the responsibility of a State Secretariat. Its goal was to protect historical heritage, recognise cultural diversity and support creative activities. Significant funds were assigned to refurbish museums, libraries, archives, auditoriums, religious buildings, architectural monuments and natural landscapes (for example, Madrid's Paseo del Arte, the National Museum of Art of Catalonia and the Royal Theatre Opera House in Madrid). Furthermore, legal regulations were adopted in order to encourage private investment in the cultural sector (*Sponsorship and Foundation Act of 2002*).

In 2004 the Ministry of Culture separated again from the Ministry of Education and was restructured (*Royal Decree 1601/2004 on the Structure of the Ministry of Culture*). The ministry was now to include the Directorate-General for Fine Arts and Cultural Assets; the Directorate-General for Books, Archives and Libraries; and the Directorate-General for Cultural Cooperation and Communication. Other bodies -the Prado Museum, the Reina Sofía Museum and Art Centre, the National Library, the National Institute of Cinematography and Audiovisual Arts and the National Institute of Music and Performing Arts- formerly dependent on the State Secretariat, now obtained an autonomous status, nevertheless they are still under the aegis of the Ministry.

A new Directorate-General for Cultural Industries and Policies was set up in 2008, to replace the former Directorate-General for Cultural Cooperation and Communication. It should be seen as an expression of the priority given to cultural industries by the new Socialist government – a new "Plan for Promoting the Cultural Industries" was presented in late 2008. On the other hand, several new organisations are to be inaugurated, including the National Centre for the Visual Arts, the National Centre of Fashion, the National Museum of Ethnography, the National Centre for the Performing Arts and Music History, the National Centre for Conservation Film and Restoration Fund, the Museum of Circus and the International Museum of the Mediterranean.

2. Structure of the cultural sector

2.1. Administrative levels

There are **three administrative levels** in Spain: central government, autonomous communities (or regions) and local authorities (which include municipalities, provinces and other local bodies). All of them have responsibilities concerning culture (as laid by the Constitution of 1978).

However, the actual distribution of expenditure in the field of culture shows that cultural policy in Spain is highly decentralised and the central government delegates most of its powers concerning cultural policy to regional and local authorities. According to figures for 2005, central government accounted for only 15.2% of all public expenditure in the field of culture, as opposed to 28.5% for regional governments and 56.3% for local authorities. The Ministry of Culture remains in charge mainly of foreign cultural policy and the institutions holding a 'national' status.

Central government

Central government cultural policy is conducted by **the Ministry of Culture**, which is currently organised into three departments:

- 1) the Directorate-General for Fine Arts and Cultural Assets;
- 2) the Directorate-General for Books, Archives and Libraries;
- 3) the Directorate-General for Cultural Industries and Policies.

Moreover, some institutions connected to the Ministry have an independent status and the capability of operating autonomously to a certain degree. These include the Prado Museum, the National Library or the National Institute of Cinematography and Audiovisual Arts.

Autonomous regions

The territory of Spain is divided into **17 autonomous regions**. Each of them has broad competencies in the sphere of cultural policy and management. Ministries or Departments of Culture can be found in all regional governments, often under the form of mixed departments (e.g. Education and Culture; Culture and Tourism; Culture and the Media; etc.). As a result of linguistic diversity in Spain, linguistic policies have often played an important part in the development of cultural policies at regional level.

Local authorities

Competences of local authorities in cultural administration were guaranteed by the *Local Regime Act 1985*. Thanks to proximity to local citizens and political significance of cultural undertakings, promotion of culture on the municipal level is widespread. According to the law, the only statutory obligation of local authorities in the field of culture is to create a library in every town of more than 5,000 inhabitants.

However, town and city councils are often responsible for the management of other local cultural facilities (libraries, museums, cultural centres), the organisation of events (festivals, regular theatre and music programmes, exhibitions, etc.) and support to other cultural organisations. In some cases, provincial authorities (*diputaciones*) also play an important role by supporting cooperation among municipal authorities within their province and managing local programmes (e.g. librarian services in rural areas, advisory services for small towns).

Cooperation among public authorities

The Ministry of Culture also co-operates with other ministries in its realization of cultural policy. Its main partners in this matter are: the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Environment and Industry, Tourism and Trade.

The state is also constitutionally obliged to coordinate the activities of different regions and facilitate communication among them. The Sub-Directorate General of Communication with the Autonomous Communities is responsible for this issue. There are also several specialised bodies that stimulate cooperation between central and regional governments – these are the Heritage Council, the Museum Council and the Archives Council among others.

Cooperation does not occur solely on the central and regional level. Municipal authorities develop joint initiatives as well. The role of local authority networks such as the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (FEMP), its equivalent organisations at regional level and the participation of some Spanish local authorities in international networks such as United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) should be noted.

2.2. Cultural organisations and events supporting minorities

Cultural organisations linked to the diverse cultures co-existing in Spain (Castilian, Catalan-Valencian, Basque, Galician) have traditionally played an important role in the cultural scene. Due to the increasing rate of immigration to Spain, initiatives designed to encourage development of minority cultures and intercultural dialogue are becoming more frequent and visible. There are numerous organisations which aim at protecting identity and traditions of minority groups (Institute of Gypsy Culture, Network of Spanish Jewish Cities). Multicultural celebrations constitute an important part of cultural events.

2.3. Employment in the cultural sector

The cultural sector tends to become more relevant in the Spanish economy. It represents approximately 3% of GDP. Employment in this sector grew by 37% between 2000 and 2006 (from 397,600 in 2000 to 544,000 in 2006). In 2006, workers of the cultural sector constituted 2.8% of the working population of Spain.

2.4. New technologies

Since 2004, the Ministry of Culture has been modernising the management of national heritage through the use of advanced computer technologies. In 2007, a database containing historical documents (the Portal of Spanish Archives) was developed. Two other innovative projects are still in the process of creation: the Virtual Library of Bibliographical Heritage, which will offer a wide range of national bibliographical heritage via Internet, and the State Museum Digital Network, which will be an on-line collection of images placed in national museums. These projects aim at facilitating access to the national heritage and bringing culture closer to the general public.

2.5. Major cultural institutions

As Spanish cultural institutions were created in various historical circumstances, they can be divided into three categories: traditional national institutions, institutions set up by civil society and institutions that originated in the time of restored democracy. National institutions from their origins have been strictly connected to the state and most of them are located in Madrid (Prado Museum, Royal Theatre, National Library, etc.). The majority of the institutions which belong to the second group was set up by the bourgeoisie (particularly in rich, industrial cities, such as Barcelona, Bilbao, Oviedo, etc.; they include, for example, the Liceu Opera House in Barcelona or the Campoamor Theatre in Oviedo). Finally, the last category embraces institutions promoting cultural decentralisation, inaugurated over the last two decades at various levels of government and usually placed outside the capital.

The management of public services in the cultural sector has been changing recently. Although most of them are supported financially by the government, fundraising in the private sector is encouraged. Moreover, a process of passing the management of these institutions from governmental hands to those of external companies has been progressing over the last few years.

3. Useful links

3.1. General resources

- **The Ministry of Culture**
<http://www.mcu.es/>
- **Cultural Contact Point** – Information about Spanish cultural operators, links to the Cultural Contact Points in autonomous regions, member-search database, etc.
<http://www.mcu.es/cooperacion/MC/PCC/index.html>
- **Cultural Policies and Trends in Europe: a Compendium of Basic Facts and Trends** – a profile of the cultural sector in Spain as well as in other European countries, an initiative of the Council of Europe and Ericarts.
www.culturalpolicies.net

3.2. Relevant associations

- **Hispania Nostra** – an association designed to protect and promote cultural heritage of Spain. Its web site includes a list of national institutions, centres and foundations from the cultural sector.
<http://www.hispanianostra.es/>
- **General Society of Authors and Publishers (SGAE)**
<http://www.sgae.es/>
- **Asociacion of Authors of Theatre of Spain (AAT)**
<http://www.aat.es/>
- **Association of Composers and Authors of Music (ACAM)**
<http://www.acam.es/>
- **Association of Cultural Magazines of Spain**
www.arce.es
- **Association of Theatre Directors of Spain**
<http://www.adeteatro.com>
- **Association of Professional Musicians**
<http://perso.wanadoo.es/ampe>
- **Musical Producers of Spain**
<http://www.promusicae.org/>
- **Professional Association of Writers of Spain**
<http://www.acescritores.com>
- **Spanish Association of Companies of Restoration of the Historical Heritage**
<http://www.arespaph.com>
- **Spanish Association of Managers of Cultural Heritage**
<http://www.aegpc.org>
- **Spanish Association of Museologists**
<http://www.museologia.net>
- **Spanish Association of Music Publishers**
http://aedem.es/component/option,com_frontpage/Itemid,1/lang,en/
- **Spanish Association of Musical Documentation**
<http://www.aedom.org>
- **Spanish Association of Publishers Guilds**
<http://www.federacioneditores.org>
- **Spanish Confederation of Associations of Archivists, Librarians, Museologists and Information Specialists**
<http://www.anabad.org>
- **Spanish Federation of Audio-visual Producers**
<http://www.fapae.es>
- **Spanish Federation of Friends of the Museums**
<http://www.amigosdemuseos.com/>

- **Spanish Federation of Societies of Archivist, Librarianship, Documentation and Museology**
<http://www.fesabid.org>
- **Spanish Federation of Associations of Cultural Managers**
<http://www.federacion-agc.es/>

3.3. Organisations with an international remit

- **Casa de America** – a consortium which aims at creating a forum of debate and exchange of ideas concerning political, economic, scientific, technological and cultural issues of the Iberoamerica.
<http://www.casamerica.es/>
- **Casa Asia** - a reference point and a center for cultural information on Asia and the Pacific and a meeting point between the Spanish society and the Asian world.
<http://www.casaasia.es/>
- **Casa África** – a public centre which aims to promote the knowledge of Africa in Spain and cooperate with African institutions.
<http://www.casafrika.es>
- **Carolina Foundation** – an institution for the promotion of cultural relations and cooperation in educational and scientific matters between Spain and the countries of the Iberoamerican Community of Nations.
<http://www.fundacioncarolina.es/>