



PRESS RELEASE

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Public thematic report

THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE'S SUPPORT FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

Since its creation, the Ministry of Culture has pursued a policy of support for the performing arts, aiming to encourage artistic creation, to provide broad access to theatres, music, dance, circus and street arts throughout the country, and to develop and diversify audiences. The Ministry's action is conducted through a wide variety of intervention methods, without equivalent abroad. The policy relies on major national operators, as well as on a series of "labelled" (accredited) venues and networks: in 2019, 10 labels distributed among each of the disciplines together covered more than 300 establishments and organisations throughout the country. To this should be added the many grants for more than a thousand companies, nearly 200 artist residencies and 150 festivals. The survey published today by the Court of Auditors focuses on the structural changes in the policy implemented by the Ministry of Culture up to 2020. It notes that although it today accounts for a minority share of the financing for this sector, the Ministry still plays a key role, but under conditions that require changes in the organisation of its action. Furthermore, it notes that although currently very abundant, the range of shows - which its support policy helps to develop - is struggling to achieve its objectives in terms of democratisation and dissemination.

The Ministry of Culture remains a key player in a dynamic sector

The performing arts benefit from significant public funding from the State and, increasingly, from local or regional authorities. While financial support by the Ministry of Culture remained stable between 2011 and the beginning of the pandemic (€766m for creation and cultural action in 2019, compared to €839m in 2020 in the context of the pandemic), funding from local authorities – and particularly from municipalities – has increased since 2015 to reach at least €2.47bn in 2019. Though not included in the budget, the intermittent¹ employment scheme is one of the complementary aspects of this ecosystem, – with at least €450 million in allowances paid in 2017 to intermittent workers in the performing arts alone. The growth in activity was dynamic up to 2020, resulting in an abundant supply of shows and performances. However, this sustained growth appears difficult to regulate since its main factors – which are the responsibility of the local authorities or the social partners under the aegis of the government for the intermittent regime – are, for the most part, outside the scope of the Ministry of Culture.

¹ People in the entertainment industry who vary between periods of employment and unemployment



An increasingly articulated policy, which nevertheless requires the readjustment of missions within the Ministry

Tools for managing quality labels and contracting with partner local authorities have been consolidated by the law of 7 July 2016 on the freedom of creativity, architecture and heritage (known as the LCAP law). The rules for the appointment of the managers of these establishments and organisations have also been improved. Thanks to these means of intervention, although local authorities now provide nearly three quarters of funding for the performing arts, the Ministry of Culture continues to be a driving force, particularly in terms of artistic creation. However, the central government does not have the tools needed to collect and use data – on the activity, resources and results of the establishments and bodies – which would enable it to implement its action in a better informed manner. Similarly, the crucial role of the Directions Régionales des Affaires Culturelles (DRACs - Regional Offices of Cultural Affairs) in the implementation of the performing arts policy at a regional level should also be better promoted by the Ministry, within the framework of renewed network management and better prioritised strategic guidelines.

Insufficient results with regard to the objectives of democratisation and dissemination


Despite sustained efforts and increased funding, the cultural democratization and audience development objectives pursued for more than 60 years appear to have enjoyed only limited success. In particular, the policy of achieving inclusiveness in and through culture needs to be better interfaced with other public policies, such as national education. Another weak point is the poor dissemination of shows and the difficulty in increasing the number of performances: some productions receiving public funding are very poorly distributed, mainly due to support systems focused on the renewal of creative output. The Court emphasises that changes in production, programming and dissemination methods, as well as in regulatory frameworks and practices, must be undertaken, and that only a holistic approach – in conjunction with the Regional Offices of Cultural Affairs (DRACs) and all the partners concerned (the State, local authorities, accredited and non-accredited venues, companies, etc.) – will make it possible to bring about the desired changes.


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PRESS CONTACTS:


Emmanuel Kessler ■ Director of Communications ■ T +33 (0)1 42 98 55 62 ■ +33 (0)6 62 48 07 81 ■
emmanuel.kessler@ccomptes.fr

Julie Poissier ■ Head of Press Relations ■ T +33 (0)1 42 98 97 43 ■ +33 (0)6 87 36 52 21 ■ julie.poissier@ccomptes.fr

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