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Policy Towards the ‘Auditorium Culture Sector’ in Poland in the First Year of the COVID-19 Pandemic: Mechanisms of Restrictions and Support with Public Funds, Including State Aid

Abstract

Objectives: The objective of the article is to describe the public policy in the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic towards the *auditorium culture sector* in the Republic of Poland. This policy was stretched between the *anti-pandemic policy* and the *anti-crisis policy*, and it appeared in the end as *the policy for the hibernation of the auditorium culture sector*.

Research Design & Methods: The methods used to prepare the article involved juridical exegesis, desk research, as well as legal, sociological, and economic analyses.

Findings: Public authorities in Poland wanted the institutions, enterprises, and creators in the auditorium culture sector to survive the period of the pandemic.

Implications / Recommendations: The article denotes what the auditorium culture sector is according to the authors. It shows the importance of operation of theatres, cinemas, museums, art galleries, historical places, cultural centres, libraries, archives, and creators for the Polish society and economy. It presents the tools of policy against the COVID-19 pandemic and seven phases of the anti-pandemic policy, with the consequences for the auditorium culture sector. It describes the scale of the disturbance in the activity of the auditorium culture sector, and mechanisms of anti-crisis and hibernating intervention towards this sector. The support intervention for the sector is described in detail; the article presents programmes and numbers. The aid for the institutions and creators in the auditorium culture sector in Poland during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic was provided by the central government, local governments, non-governmental organisations (sectoral NGOs), public cultural institutions, and artistic schools.

Contribution / Value Added: The article based on the “lesson learnt” method brings knowledge to public policy and for decision-makers in the face of future threats of a similar type.

Keywords: public policy, cultural policy, culture, art, auditorium culture sector, COVID-19, state aid, subsidies, the European Union, economic crisis

Article classification: research paper

JEL classification: J48, H11, H12, H20, H23, H24, H25, H71, H80, H81, H84, O52, P11, Z11, Z18

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Introduction

The article deals with the subject of anti-pandemic and anti-crisis policy carried out by the Republic of Poland (RP) in the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic in the area of specific sectoral policy that is *the auditorium culture policy* as the part of the cultural policy. The auditorium culture sector is the authors concept and denotes that part of the culture sector that involves many people directly participating in the cultural experience simultaneously at the same time, in the same physical space. Entities from this sector produce and disseminate cultural goods related to the direct participation in their reception and experience of the audience in the same physical space and at the same moment. It, therefore, includes the activities of theatres, cinemas, museums, art galleries, historical places, cultural centres, libraries, archives, creators, and audiences in this sector.

The scientific background for the article is institutionalism (Dye, 2013, p. 17), but it moves beyond institutionalism to network paradigm (Anioł, pp. 63–67). In the pandemic situation, government institutions became a centre of determining, implementing, and enforcing the *anti-pandemic policy* and the *anti-crisis policy*. In March 2020, at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the activity of the auditorium culture sector was adjudged to be a potential source of threats and disease outbreaks by the Polish Government. Consequently, it was included in the spectrum of activities potentially threatening public health and creating the risk of negative impact on achieving goals and expected results identified in the anti-pandemic policy. Hence, during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, the operation of entities in this sector was the object of lockdowns, restrictions, and reopenings. As a result of this policy, the entities of the analysed sector alternately experienced a state of *pandemic hibernation*, and then underwent the process of *awakening to activity*. They could not operate as usual, they could not generate incomes, hence the central government and the local governments arranged state aid for

them as the part of the anti-crisis policy. During the pandemic, the activity of non-governmental organisations was also visible.

The aim of the undertaken research was to identify the policy tools used by the Polish government towards the auditorium culture sector during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic. The hypothesis of the research was as follows – in the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Polish government on the one hand applied the sectoral anti-pandemic policy framework to the auditorium culture sector and assumed that this sector posed a threat to public health, thus significantly limiting its functioning, but applied the approach of phases of strengthening and weakening restrictions; on the other hand, the Polish government and local governments arranged state aid for entities in the auditorium culture sector as part of the anti-crisis policy.

The research covered only the institutional area of the Republic of Poland. The methods used to prepare the article involved juridical exegesis, desk research as well as legal, sociological, and economic analyses. All legal acts of the Polish government creating the anti-pandemic policy and anti-crisis policy – as well as influencing the activities of the auditorium culture sector in force at that time – were identified and analysed. The study period covers the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, i.e. from early March 2020 to early March 2021. The research was conducted by the authors of this article from February 2021 to May 2021 and presented on the scientific conference titled “Public policies at the time of the COVID-19 pandemic. The analysis of the problem and future challenges”, organised in Szczecin, Poland, by the Institute of Political and Security Sciences, University of Szczecin, and the Polish Association of Political Sciences on June 9th, 2021.

This article presents and characterises the legal instruments of the anti-pandemic policy and anti-crisis policy of the Republic of Poland, i.e. laws and regulations at the national level and the instruments on the local government level,

which were important for the auditorium culture sector, including the assessment of their impact on this sector. The analysis carried out by the authors of the article allowed them to distinguish seven phases of the policy towards the auditorium culture sector as an element of the anti-Covid policy of the Republic of Poland in the first year of the pandemic, which is also presented in the paper.

The auditorium culture sector and its role in the society

The auditorium culture sector is a concept which denotes this part of the culture sector that is associated with the direct participation in the cultural experience of many people at the same time and in the same physical space. In the Polish language, the word 'auditorium' means a group of people listening to a lecture, a speech,

a concert, a broadcast, etc. Moreover, both in Polish and in English, it denotes a big place (a chamber, hall) for the enclosed public gathering (e.g. lectures, concerts, theatre performances) (Słownik Języka Polskiego PWN, 2007, p. 64; Oxford Learner's Dictionary, 2021). Entities from the auditorium culture sector produce and disseminate cultural goods related to the direct and simultaneous participation in their reception and experience of the audience in the same physical space. It is created by cultural institutions (state and local government), non-governmental organisations (including social economy entities), and enterprises from the culture sector, and within them by particular individuals (creators, artists, animators, organisers). Entities operating in this sector in the national economy are included in the Polish Classification of Activities [Pol. *Polska Klasyfikacja Działalności*, PKD] in the subclasses listed in Table 1.

Table 1. The auditorium culture sector

No.	Subclass according to the Polish Classification of Activities (PKD)	Name	Description of the subclass in the scope included in the auditorium culture sector
1.	59.14.Z	Activities related to film screening	The entirety of the subclass: The screening of films or video recordings in cinemas, in the open air or elsewhere; activities of film clubs.
2.	90.01.Z	Activities related to staging artistic performances	The entirety of the subclass: Staging of theatre, opera, ballet, musical, and other performances; activities of circus groups, orchestras, and musical groups; the activities of individual artists such as actors, dancers, singers, lecturers, or presenters.
3.	90.02.Z	Activities supporting the staging of artistic performances	The entirety of the subclass: Activities supporting the development of theatre, opera, ballet, musical, and other productions; activities of film directors, producers, set designers, designers and performers of stage scenery, stage engineers, stage lighting specialists, announcers, etc.; the activities of producers of artistic performances, on-site or off-site.
4.	90.04.Z	Operation of the cultural object	The entirety of the subclass: The operation of theatres and concert halls, galleries and exhibition halls, cultural centres, community centres, and other cultural facilities.
5.	47.78.Z	Retail sale of other new goods in specialised stores	Part of the subclass: Retail sales by commercial art galleries [<i>in the field of works of art and exhibition activities – note by A. B. and K. O.</i>].

Table 1 – continuation

No.	Subclass according to the Polish Classification of Activities (PKD)	Name	Description of the subclass in the scope included in the auditorium culture sector
6.	47.79.Z	Retail sale of second-hand goods in specialised stores	Part of the subclass: Retail sale of second-hand books, other used articles, antiques, conducted by auction houses <i>[in the field of works of art and cultural heritage facilities and exhibition activities – note by A. B. and K. O.]</i> .
7.	91.01.A	Operation of libraries	The entirety of the subclass: Documentary and informational activities of libraries of all kinds, reading rooms, listening and viewing rooms, provided to the general public or special audiences, including students, scientists, teachers, members; the accumulation of collections; the cataloguing of collections; lending and storing books, maps, periodicals, films, CDs, tapes, works of art, etc.; searching for information from possessed collections, etc.; the storage of photos and videos by libraries; related services.
8.	91.01.B	Operation of archives	The entirety of the subclass: Documentary and informational activities of public archives provided to the general-public or special audiences including students, scientists, teachers, members; the activities of government archives; the accumulation of collections; the cataloguing of collections; lending and storing books, maps, periodicals, films, CDs, tapes, works of art, etc.; research with the use of available collections, etc.
9.	91.02.Z	Operation of museums	The entirety of the subclass: The activities of museums of all kinds, such as museums of art, jewellery, furniture, costumes, ceramics, silverware; museums of natural history, science and technology, or history, including military museums and memorials; other specialised museums; open-air museums.
10.	91.03.Z	Operation of historic sites and buildings as well as other similar tourist attractions	The entirety of the subclass: The conservation and protection of historic sites and buildings as well as historic movable objects.

Source: Own elaboration based on *Biznes.gov.pl*, 2021.

Table 2 presents the available data approximating this sector in terms of the numerical characteristics of entities by the PKD classes, according to the data of the Central Statistical Office. Unfortunately, there are many inconsistencies in the available data, which makes the summaries of the numerical sector difficult. The number of institutions operating in this sector and employing workers amounts to at least 15.7 thousand. In 2019, there were 528 cinemas in Poland. There were 188 theatres and musical institutions with their permanent artistic ensemble, but the total number of operating theatres of different status

and characteristics in the 2015/2016 season was estimated at 847. There were 4,255 cultural centres and clubs as well as community centres. There were 327 art galleries and salons organising exhibitions as well as 208 art galleries, auction houses, and antique shops operating on the art and antique market, with 94 of them organising exhibitions. The total of 9,326 libraries and library & information centres as well as 33 state archives made their collections available, and 342 entities declared the activity of the archives in REGON. There were also 959 museums (including branches). Moreover, 1,302 entities declared to operate

Table 2. The number of national economy entities registered in the REGON register declaring that they operate in PKD subclasses of the auditorium culture sector as of March 31st, 2020, and the number and type of institutional entities in the auditorium culture sector in Poland in 2019 in public statistics

No.	PKD subclass	The domain of activity in the auditorium culture sector	Number of entities registered in the REGON register		Name in studies in the field of culture statistics	Number of entities
			Declaring running a subclass activity legal personality	Legal persons / organisational units without legal personality		
State as of March 31, 2020						
1.	59.14.Z	Film screening	255	126	Cinemas	528
2.	90.01.Z	Staging artistic performances (theatres, musical institutions; actors, dancers, singers, readers, presenters)	7,457	1,331	Theatres and musical institutions with a permanent artistic team	188
3.	90.02.Z	Supporting the staging of artistic performances (producers, directors, stage specialists)	2,616	403	Theatres of various status and characteristics, operating in 2015/2016	847
4.	90.04.Z	Cultural facilities	2,872	2,553	Data not available	Data not available
5.	47.78.Z	Art galleries selling new works	Data not available	Data not available	Cultural centres, community centres	4,255
6.	47.79.Z	Art galleries, auction houses, and antique shops selling second-hand art	Data not available	Data not available	Galleries and art salons organising exhibitions	327
7.	91.01.A	Libraries	2,141	2,130	Libraries and library & information centres	9,326
8.	91.01.B	Archives	342	221	State archives	33
9.	91.02.Z	Museums	651	603	Museums	959
10.	91.03.Z	Historic sites and buildings and similar tourist attractions	1,302	237	Immovable monuments in the Register of Monuments	78,009
SUM			17,636	7,604		10,032

Source: Own elaboration based on: GUS, 2021a, Table 1 and 5; GUS and US in Kraków, 2020a, pp. 36, 43–88; Theatre Institute, 2017; Open Data, 2020.

in the domain of historical places and buildings, and in 2019, 78,000 immovable monuments have been visited or have had the potential to be visited¹ (GUS, 2021a, Tables 1 and 5; GUS and US in Kraków, 2020a, pp. 36; 43–88; Open Data, 2020).

In 2019, 59,051 people worked in creative activities related to culture and entertainment², while 48,409 people were employed in libraries, archives, museums, and other institutions conducting activities related to culture. In total, this amounts to 107,460 persons employed in the national economy (GUS, 2020a, Table 2). In 2019, 8,339 natural persons ran a business in the following professions: actor, dancer, singer, voiceover, presenter, announcer, producer, director, stage designer, stage specialist (designer and performer of stage scenery, stage engineer, stage lighting specialist) (GUS, 2021a, Tables 1 and 5).

Research by the SWPS University of Social Sciences and Humanities indicates that the number of artists, creators, and performers in Poland in 2018 was 59,870 people³, of which at least 48,815 people were included in the auditorium

culture sector (in the areas of music, visual arts, theatre, film, dance) (Ilczuk et al., 2019, p. 25). The IBS estimated that in 2015, 75,000 people worked in the field of artistic performance, literary creation, and the activities of cultural facilities; 18,000 people worked in the production and distribution of films and TV programmes; 18,000 in libraries and archives; and 15,000 in museums – i.e. a total of 126,000 (Baran & Lewandowski, 2017, p. 20). It seems that it can be estimated that before the COVID-19 pandemic, the auditorium culture sector was the source of jobs to the minimum of 120 thousand people.

The auditorium culture sector is important not only for cultural institutions, creators, and artists, but also for viewers, giving them a cultural experience, all of which contributes to the duration and development of culture. In 2019, the total attendance in auditorium culture institutions

Table 3. Attendance in auditorium culture institutions in Poland in 2019 (in millions)

No.	Institution	Attendance 2019 (mln)
1.	Cinemas	61,9
2.	Museums	40,2
3.	Historic sites (castles, palaces, churches, park complexes)	37,5*
4.	Cultural centres (events**)	37,5
5.	Theatres	14,4
6.	Libraries (readers)	6,0
7.	Art galleries and art salons	4,5
8.	Cultural centres (circles, clubs, art groups)	0,851
9.	State archives (resource users + tour participants)	0,0407
SUM		202,89

* Own estimates based on the GUS data and the assumption that a visitor visits historical places three times a year on average.

** workshops, lectures, meetings, lectures, concerts, festivals, art reviews, concerts, interdisciplinary events.

Source: Own elaboration based on: GUS and US in Kraków, 2020a, pp. 43-88; GUS, 2021b, section IX, Table 1 (51).

¹ These objects were in various ownership. According to data from 2017, the proportions of ownership were as follows: church (26%); private / natural persons (20%); local government (18%); the state (11%); mixed (7%); private / legal persons (6%). In 2020, there were 77.5 thousand immovable monuments in Poland. These are also various objects: residential, religious, residential, farm, public, industrial, economic, defence, cemeteries, greenery, urban planning (Open data, 2020; NID, 2020; NID, 2017, pp. 51, 108; NID, 2016).

² The division of the PKD's 90 covering activities related to staging artistic performances (90.01.Z) and supporting it (90.02.Z), artistic and literary creative activity (90.03.Z), and activities of cultural facilities (90.04.Z). Artistic and literary creative activity was declared in REGON in 2020 by 5,872 entities (5,587 natural persons and 285 legal persons or organisational units without legal personality). GUS, 2021a, Tables 1 and 5.

³ Estimated population numbers by the following industries: music (19,100), architecture (12,500), visual arts (12,005), theatre (5,750), film (3,580), literature (2,830), dance (2,380), folk art (1,475), interdisciplinary (350) (Ilczuk et al., 2019, p. 25).

in Poland can be estimated at almost 203 million participants. Detailed data is presented in Table 3.

The data of the Central Statistical Office (Pol. *Główny Urząd Statystyczny*, GUS) indicates that in 2019, Poles most often made use of cinema offers (61.2% according to the declaration of Poles aged 15+), visited historical monuments (38.5%), visited museums in the country (26.7%), visited libraries or reading rooms (24.6%), and participated in theatrical performances (20.2%). They less often participated in festivals (10.1%), visited art galleries in the country (10%), attended the philharmonic hall or classical music concerts (8.3%), attended opera or operetta performances (5.8%), and participated in performances of ballet or dance (5.7%) (GUS and US in Kraków, 2020b, p. 18).

Tools and phases of the Polish government's policy against the COVID-19 pandemic, limiting the functioning of the auditorium culture sector

In the Republic of Poland, the policy of counteracting the COVID-19 pandemic was based on *The Act of December 5th, 2008 on preventing and combating human infections and infectious diseases in humans* (Journal of Laws of 2008, No. 234, item 1570). The first legal act directly related to COVID-19 was *The Act of March 2nd, 2020, on special solutions related to the prevention, counteraction and combating of COVID-19, other infectious diseases and the emergencies caused by them* (Journal of Laws of 2020, item 374). On March 14th, an epidemic emergency was introduced in the territory of the Republic of Poland⁴, and an epidemic state was announced on March 20th⁵. Numerous restrictions have been imposed on society and economic activity.

⁴ *Regulation of the Minister of Health of March 13th, 2020, on the announcement of an epidemic threat in the territory of the Republic of Poland* (Journal of Laws no. 2020, item 433).

⁵ *Regulation of the Minister of Health of March 20th, 2020, on the declaration of an epidemic in the territory*

During the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Council of Ministers, as a ruling tool in the anti-pandemic policy, used the regulations on imposing certain restrictions, orders, and bans in connection with the outbreak of an epidemic as implementing acts to the *Act of December 5th, 2008 on preventing and combating human infections and infectious diseases in humans*. In the analysed period, there were thirteen of them and forty-one amending regulations.

In the period from the beginning of March 2020 to the beginning of March 2021, the authors of this article distinguished between seven phases of the anti-pandemic policy with consequences for the auditorium culture sector. These phases were:

1. **The starting point for the anti-pandemic policy** – the fundamental law, the legal basis for the anti-pandemic policy: *The Act of December 5th, 2008, on preventing and combating human infections and infectious diseases in humans*.
2. **The preparation of the legal freezing of the economy, including the auditorium culture sector.** *The Act of March 2nd, 2020, on special solutions related to the prevention, counteraction and combating of COVID-19, other infectious diseases and the emergencies caused by them* introduced changes to *The Act of December 5th, 2008, on preventing and combating infections and infectious diseases in people*. Provisions have been added allowing for the establishment of temporary limitation of specific scopes of business activity, temporary restriction of the use of premises or land and the obligation to secure them, and an order or prohibition to stay in specific places, areas, and facilities.
3. **The complete freezing of the auditorium culture sector** (from March 13th to May 3rd, 2020). A complete ban on performing activities in the field of performing arts and all forms of collective culture and entertainment, philharmonics, operas, operettas, theatres, cinemas,

of the Republic of Poland (Journal of Laws no. 2020, item 491).

libraries, archives, museums and historical places, community centres, art galleries (PKD 90.0, 91.0, 59.14.Z)⁶.

4. **The partial unfreezing of the auditorium culture sector under pandemic rigours** (from May 4th to June 5th, 2020). A complete ban on performing performance arts and film screenings (PKD 90.01 and 59.14.Z). Libraries, archives, museums, and historical places (PKD 91.0) could resume their activity by fulfilling the obligation to cover the mouth and nose with clothing or parts thereof, masks, a visor, or a protective helmet⁷.
5. **The reopening under pandemic rigours of the auditorium culture sector** (from June 6th to November 27th, 2020). The permission to conduct creative activity related to all collective forms of culture and entertainment (PKD 90.0) as well as cinema activities (PKD 59.14.Z), provided that the viewers comply with the obligation to cover their mouths and nose, and take no more than half (from

⁶ Legal bases for the stage: *Regulation of the Minister of Health of March 13th, 2020, on the declaration of an epidemic threat in the territory of the Republic of Poland* (Journal of Laws no. 2020, item 433); *Regulation of the Minister of Health of March 20th, 2020, on the announcement of an epidemic in the territory of the Republic of Poland* (Journal of Laws no. 2020, item 491); *Regulation of the Council of Ministers of March 31st, 2020, on the establishment of certain restrictions, orders and bans in connection with an epidemic* (Journal of Laws no. 2020, item 566); *Regulation of the Council of Ministers of April 10th, 2020, on the establishment of certain restrictions, orders and bans in connection with the occurrence of an epidemic* (Journal of Laws no. 2020, item 658); *Regulation of the Council of Ministers of April 19th, 2020, on the establishment of certain restrictions, orders and bans in connection with an epidemic* (Journal of Laws no. 2020, item 697).

⁷ Legal bases for the stage: *Regulation of the Council of Ministers of May 2nd, 2020, on the establishment of certain restrictions, orders and bans in connection with the occurrence of an epidemic* (Journal of Laws no. 2020, item 792); *Regulation of the Council of Ministers of May 16th, 2020, on the establishment of certain restrictions, orders and bans in connection with an epidemic* (Journal of Laws no. 2020, item 878).

October 10th, 2020, it was 25%) of the number of seats available to viewers or listeners (or, from October 10th, 2020, keeping the distance in the audience between the spectators/listeners 1.5 m) and in the open air from June 19th, provided it is ensured that at the same time the number of spectators, listeners, visitors, or participants is not more than 1 person per 5 square metres, keeping a distance of at least 2 metres (from August 8th – 1.5 metres) from other people by marking with horizontal signs places for the public, taking into account a distance of 2 metres (from August 8th – 1.5 metres) in order to ensure that viewers, listeners, visitors, or participants comply with the obligation to cover the mouth and nose unless a distance of not less than 2 metres from other people is kept. Restricted activities could also be conducted by libraries, archives, museums, and historical sites (PKD 91.0)⁸.

6. **The closing of the auditorium culture sector to direct audience experience** (from November 28th, 2020, to January 29th, 2021). The performance arts sector (PKD 90.0) and museums (PKD 91.02.Z) could operate without the participation of the public. It was allowed to carry out activities necessary to prepare artistic events, such as rehearsals and exercises, phonographic and audio-visual recordings, and events transmitted using direct remote communication. Museums were forbidden to make their collections available to the public inside cubature interiors and to organise events involving the public. They could carry out

⁸ Legal bases for the stage: *Regulation of the Council of Ministers of May 29th, 2020, on establishing certain restrictions, orders and bans in connection with the occurrence of an epidemic* (Journal of Laws no. 2020, item 964); *Regulation of the Council of Ministers of June 19th, 2020, on the establishment of certain restrictions, orders and bans in connection with the occurrence of an epidemic* (Journal of Laws, no. 2020, item 1066); *Regulation of the Council of Ministers of August 7th, 2020, on the establishment of certain restrictions, orders and bans in connection with the occurrence of an epidemic* (Journal of Laws no. 2020, item 1356).

activities through direct remote communication, make the collections available in a non-contact form, in compliance with appropriate sanitary requirements, and provide access to outdoor collections and historic forests, parks, and gardens. The prohibition related also to the operation of cinemas (PKD 59.14.Z), except for activities that could be carried out using means of direct remote communication. Libraries could make collections available, provided that no more than 1 person per 15 square metres of the area is present in the room accessible to the people who use them, except for librarians⁹.

7. The reopening under pandemic rigours of the auditorium culture sector (from January 30th to March 14th, 2021). From January 30th, activities of galleries and cultural institutions conducting exhibitions (museums) were allowed. Libraries operated under the rigours of the previous period. From February 12th, theatres and cinemas were allowed to operate under certain restrictions and regimes. Indoor activities related to all collective forms of culture and entertainment (PKD 90.0) were allowed in the scope related to the preparation and implementation of artistic events, exhibitions, and activities related to the projection of films or video recordings in cultural centres, cinemas, or other places and activities of film clubs (PKD 59.14), provided that: 1) viewers or listeners are made available every second seat in the audience, however not more than 50% of the number of seats, in the absence of designated seats in the audience, while maintaining a distance of 1.5 metres between viewers or listeners; 2) it is ensured that viewers or listeners comply with the order to cover

the mouth and nose; 3) it is ensured that viewers or listeners do not eat drinks or meals¹⁰.

At the end of February 2021, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Culture and National Heritage Professor Piotr Gliński indicated that the sanitary regime is respected in cultural institutions, and the ongoing monitoring carried out by the ministry confirmed that no pandemic outbreaks had been recorded in them. He also noticed that after unfreezing in the rigours of auditorium culture (phase 7 of the policy), Poles were eager for contact with culture, which manifested in queues in front of cultural institutions (Redakcja *wPolityce.pl*, 2021).

The scale of the disturbance in the activity of the auditorium culture sector

Already in the first quarter of 2020, over half of the public cultural institutions declared that they had experienced the negative effects of the pandemic. In the second quarter, this percentage was 65%, and in the third quarter, it was 62%. Revenues from economic activity decreased in all entities. The entities in the area of creative activity related to culture and entertainment experienced the strongest negative effects, which were indicated by 70% of them in the first quarter, 81% in the second quarter, and 78% in the third quarter of 2020 (GUS, 2020b, p. 1; GUS, 2020c, p. 1; GUS, 2021i, p. 1).

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the imposed restrictions, in 2020, 50,9% of museums and museum branches limited their cultural

⁹ Legal bases for the stage: *Regulation of the Council of Ministers of December 1st, 2020, on establishing certain restrictions, orders and bans in connection with the occurrence of an epidemic* (Journal of Laws no. 2020, item 2132); *Regulation of the Council of Ministers of December 21st, 2020, on the establishment of certain restrictions, orders and bans in connection with an epidemic* (Journal of Laws no. 2020, item 2316).

¹⁰ Legal bases for the stage: *Regulation of the Council of Ministers of January 29th, 2021, amending the regulation on the establishment of certain restrictions, orders and bans in connection with the occurrence of an epidemic* (Journal of Laws no. 2021, item 207); *Regulation of the Council of Ministers of February 11th, 2021, amending the regulation on the establishment of certain restrictions, orders and bans in connection with an epidemic* (Journal of Laws no. 2021, item 267); *Regulation of the Council of Ministers of February 26th, 2021, on the establishment of certain restrictions, orders and bans in connection with an epidemic* (Journal of Laws no. 2021, item 367).

activities. This means that during that period they did not prepare and make the cultural offer available to recipients. In March, i.e. in the first month of the restrictions in force, the number of museums limiting their activities peaked (47%); a similar situation took place in November and December as a result of the recurrence of the disease wave. On the other hand, from June to October 2020, over 80% of entities conducted cultural activities while maintaining the sanitary requirements. Museums and museum departments implemented part of the cultural, scientific, and educational offer online, which can be described as external hibernation (internal activity of an individual without the direct participation of the public). Owing to these activities, 1367 exhibitions were made available to the audience through websites, social networks, and online video channels. The number of stationary temporary exhibitions decreased by 40% and the number of permanent ones decreased by 8,7% when compared to the previous year. During that period, the number of visitors decreased by 23,6 million (58,7%) (GUS, 2021d).

Out of 194 theatres and music institutions operating at the beginning of 2020, as a result of restrictions imposed on their activity, 114 (58,8%) limited their cultural activities. Already in March, over 50% of entities introduced restrictions on their activity. And from July to October, over 70% of theatres and musical institutions conducted cultural activities in sanitary conditions. Here, too, we observed external hibernation, as nearly 89% of entities made online performances and concerts available during the pandemic. Spectators could participate in 3,943 concerts and performances this way (GUS, 2021e).

During the analysed period, 64,5% of art galleries limited their cultural activities. As in the rest of the sector, the greatest number of units reduced their activity in March (59,9%), and the least in July and August (17,6% each). 65,5% of art galleries and salons have made their exhibitions available online, the total number of virtual exhibitions was 896 (GUS, 2021f).

The number of organised mass art and entertainment events in 2020 decreased by 89,5% compared to 2019 (GUS, 2021h).

In the first year of the pandemic, fixed cinemas staged 50,1% fewer screenings and gathered 68,4% fewer viewers. The number of produced full-length feature films decreased by nearly 1/4 (from 41 to 35) compared to the previous year. At the same time, the number of full-length documentaries produced has increased (from 16 to 26). The activity was limited by 60% of entities involved in film production. Most of them in April (every second unit), and least of them in the months from July to September (one in five units). Of the films planned for this year, 18 feature-length films and 182 medium and short films were not made (GUS, 2021g).

The above illustrates the scale of limitation of the direct experience of culture for spectators in Poland, as well as the degree of disorder affecting all participants of the auditorium culture sector. Poles had definitely limited access to this part of culture. For state cultural institutions, the financial situation, due to the maintenance of earmarked subsidies, did not deteriorate. In 2020, they achieved total revenues of 1,92 billion PLN (492,3 million USD), and in 2019 it was 1,8 billion PLN (465,16 million USD). Their costs in 2020 were 1,87 billion PLN (480 million USD). The revenues of self-government cultural institutions decreased by 7,7% from PLN 8,39 billion PLN (2,15 billion USD) in 2019 to 7,74 billion PLN (1,99 billion USD) in 2020. Their costs in 2020 were 7,59 billion PLN (1,95 billion USD) (GUS, 2021j). In local government budgets, spending on culture decreased significantly by 5,6% (198 million PLN) due to the limitation of the organisation of cultural and entertainment events (Nielicki, 2021).

Anti-crisis mechanisms and hibernating intervention towards the auditorium culture sector

The anti-crisis policy in Poland was based on two pillars: the Anti-Crisis Shield in versions

1.0–7.0 and the Financial Shield in versions PFR 1.0–2.0. The shape and scope of public intervention underwent significant modifications. It began from a broad mechanism addressed to all market participants – the so-called model of universal distribution of public funds. The model of universal distribution of public funds was identical to every industry, without the specificity of the sectors being recognised and taken into account, which could potentially risk inadequate and ineffective interventions. Transforming over time to directing support for selected sectors and industries – based on the recognition of the specificity and the pandemic-related needs of the sectors, as well as on identification through the Polish Classification of Activities (PKD) – the so-called selective model of the distribution of public funds¹¹. In its assumptions, the aid system had to consider the proportionality of the distribution of benefits to market participants, as the mechanisms addressed to entrepreneurs had to take into account the principles of state aid resulting from Art. 107 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU)¹². The European Commission (EC) was notified of the planned aid programmes, based on the EC Notice: *Temporary framework of state aid measures to support the economy in the context of the ongoing COVID-19 epidemic*¹³.

¹¹ It can also be called: dedicated, vertical, sector, or industry.

¹² More: Notice from the Commission on the notion of state aid within the meaning of Art. 107 paragraph. 1 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (C/2016/2946, OJ C262, 19.7.2016, pp. 1–50) <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/PL/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52016XC0719%2805%29> (accessed: 20.02.2021).

¹³ Commission Notice (2020): Temporary framework for state aid measures to support the economy in the context of the ongoing COVID-19 epidemic (consolidated version). Authentic versions of the temporary framework for State aid measures adopted on March 19th, 2020 (C (2020) 1863) and their revisions: C (2020) 2215 of April 3rd, 2020, C (2020) 3156 of May 8th, 2020, C (2020) 4509 of June 29th, 2020, C (2020) 7127 of October 13th, 2020, and C (2021) 564 of January 28th, 2021, have been published in the *Journal of the European Union*. <https://ec.europa>.

The regulations referred to as the Anti-Crisis Shields were introduced in specially dedicated acts on counteracting the economic effects of the coronavirus pandemic. The authors of the acts involved the Ministry of Development, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy, as well as the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage. The works were carried out under the supervision of the Chancellery of the Prime Minister of the Council of Ministers in cooperation with other ministries and public agencies. In the area of cultural policy, including support for the auditorium culture sector, the activities were conducted by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage. Entities in this sector could benefit from two waves of universal/horizontal support instruments (from March 2020) and selective support instruments (from May 2020). The government of the Republic of Poland designed and implemented the following aid mechanisms (which were notified to the European Commission):

1. Anti-crisis shield 1.0¹⁴
2. Anti-crisis shield 2.0¹⁵
3. Anti-crisis shield 3.0¹⁶

[eu/competition/state_aid/what_is_new/covid_19.html](https://ec.europa.eu/competition/state_aid/what_is_new/covid_19.html) (accessed: 20.02.2021).

¹⁴ Legal bases for the shield: *Act of March 31st, 2020, amending the Act on special solutions related to the prevention, prevention and combating of COVID-19, other infectious diseases and crises caused by them, and some other acts* (Journal of Laws no. 2020, item 568); *Regulation of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage (MKiDN) of April 2nd, 2020, on financial support for natural persons, legal persons or organisational units without legal personality to change the form of disseminating creative or artistic activity during the period of an epidemic threat or state of an epidemic* (Journal of Laws no. 2020, item 583).

¹⁵ Legal bases for the shield: *Act of April 16th, 2020, on specific support instruments in connection with the spread of SARS-CoV-2 virus* (Journal of Laws no. 2020, item 695); *Act of April 3rd, 2020, on special solutions supporting the implementation of operational programmes in connection with the occurrence of COVID-19 in 2020* (Journal of Laws no. 2020, item 694).

¹⁶ Legal bases for the shield: *Act of May 14th, 2020, amending certain acts in the field of protective measures in connection with the spread of SARS-CoV-2 virus* (Journal of Laws no. 2020, item 875).

4. Anti-crisis shield 4.0¹⁷
5. Anti-crisis shield 5.0 (the so-called industry shield)¹⁸
6. Anti-crisis shield 6.0 (the so-called industry-specific)¹⁹
7. Anti-crisis shield 7.0²⁰
8. Anti-crisis shield 8.0²¹

¹⁷ Legal bases for the shield: *Act of June 19th, 2020, on interest subsidies for bank loans granted to entrepreneurs suffering from the effects of COVID-19 and on simplified proceedings for approval of an arrangement in connection with the occurrence of COVID-19* (Journal of Laws of 2020, item 1086); *Act of May 28th, 2020, amending the Corporate Income Tax Act, the Goods and Services Tax Act, the Act on the Exchange of Tax Information with Other Countries, and Certain Other Acts* (Journal of Laws no. 2020, item 1106).

¹⁸ Legal bases for the shield: *Act of September 17th, 2020, amending the Act on special solutions related to the prevention, prevention and combating of COVID-19, other infectious diseases and crises caused by them, and some other acts* (Journal of Laws no. 2020, item 1639); *Regulation of the Council of Ministers of September 30th, 2020, on financial support for entities conducting cultural activity in the field of theatre, music or dance* (Journal of Laws no. 2020, item 1729); *Regulation of the Minister of Culture, National Heritage and Sport of October 30th, 2020, on financial support for authors and artists in the form of social assistance* (Journal of Laws no. 2020, item 1938).

¹⁹ Legal bases for the shield: *Act of December 9th, 2020, amending the Act on special solutions related to the prevention, prevention and combating of COVID-19, other infectious diseases and crises caused by them and some other acts* (Journal of Laws no. 2020, item 2255); *Act of November 28th, 2020, amending the act on personal income tax, the act on corporate income tax, the act on flat-rate income tax on certain revenues earned by natural persons, and some other acts* (Journal of 2020, item 2123); *Act of January 21st, 2021, amending the act on special solutions related to the prevention, prevention and combating of COVID-19, other infectious diseases and crises caused by them, and some other acts* (Journal of Laws no. 2021, item 159).

²⁰ Legal basis for the shield: *Regulation of the Council of Ministers of January 19th, 2021, on support for participants in economic transactions affected by the COVID-19 pandemic* (Journal of Laws no. 2021, item 152).

²¹ Legal basis for the shield: *Regulation of the Council of Ministers of February 26th, 2021, on support for participants in economic transactions affected by the COVID-19 pandemic* (Journal of Laws no. 2021, item 371).

9. The Polish Development Fund (PFR) 1.0 financial shield²²
10. PFR 2.0 financial shield (the so-called industry shield)²³.

Based on the above-mentioned instruments, a wide range of solutions was developed aimed at entities from the auditorium culture sector. In the first period of the COVID-19 pandemic (from March 31st, 2020), these were multi-sector instruments supplemented by an intervention programme dedicated to culture, i.e. *Culture in the web* (for activities from May 2021). On August 14th, 2020, the legal basis for the intervention and the use of public funds from the state budget by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage for financial support in the form of social aid for authors and artists was adopted as well as public funds from the COVID-19 Counteracting Fund were used to support local government artistic institutions, non-governmental organisations, and entrepreneurs operating in the field of theatre, music or dance²⁴. From October 2020 (Anti-crisis Shield 5.0), specific solutions targeted

²² Legal bases for the shield: *Act of July 4th, 2019, on the system of development institutions* (Journal of Laws of 2019, item 1572), amended by the *Act of March 31st, 2020, amending the Act on the system of development institutions* (Journal of Laws of 2020, item 569); *Act of April 16th, 2020, on special support instruments in connection with the spread of SARS-CoV-2 virus* (Journal of Laws of 2020, item 695).

²³ Legal basis for the shield: *Act of July 4th, 2019, on the system of development institutions* (Journal of Laws of 2019, item 1572), amended by the *Act of March 31st, 2020, on the system of development institutions* (Journal of Laws of 2020, item 569) and the *Act of April 16th, 2020, on specific support instruments in connection with the spread of SARS-CoV-2 virus* (Journal of Laws of 2020, item 695).

²⁴ *The Act of August 14th, 2020, amending the Act on special solutions related to the prevention, prevention and combating of COVID-19, other infectious diseases and emergencies caused by them, and the Act amending the Act on special solutions related to the prevention, prevention and combating of COVID 19, other infectious diseases and crisis situations caused by them and certain other acts* (Journal of Laws no. 2020, item 1478). Effective as of September 4th, 2020.

at the auditorium culture sector were launched in response to environmental demands and the scale of the pandemic-related degradation²⁵.

In July 2020, the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage announced that the total value of the multidimensional state support for the culture sector in Poland provided after the announcement of the epidemic threat and restrictions on the activities of cultural institutions amounted to over 5 billion PLN (1,28 billion USD) (Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, 2020a). In February 2021, the Minister of Culture and National Heritage Professor Piotr Gliński indicated that in the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic (from March 2020 to February 2021), the anti-crisis shield for culture²⁶ amounted to 6 billion PLN (1,54 billion USD). He emphasised that most of the aid involved activities that were implemented for the entire Polish economy. He claimed that none of the people of culture was left alone, because everyone could get social assistance. In the first year of the pandemic, the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage awarded 13,807 social benefits in the amount of 1,8 thousand PLN each (461 USD). Some people received this help several – even 6 – times. The cost of social benefits accounted almost 25 million PLN (6,4 mln USD) (Redakcja *wPolityce.pl*, 2021).

²⁵ Including, among others: compensation for lost revenues, one-off industry parking benefit for people who have already used the parking benefit on general terms and conduct business with the codes PKD 90.01.Z, 90.02.Z, and later also 90.04.Z, 59.14.Z; the possibility of receiving financial support by a creator or artist with achievements in the field of cultural activity and in a difficult financial situation. On January 21st, 2021, a transfer of 120 million PLN to the Polish Film Institute was made to finance or co-finance the costs incurred by entities operating in the field of cinematography from November 1st, 2020, to April 30th, 2021, as a result of COVID-19.

²⁶ This name was used by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage to define the package of all anti-crisis tools, both implemented for the entire economy and specific to the industry, which could be used by the culture-sector entities (Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, 2021a).

The support intervention for the auditorium culture sector – programmes and amounts.

The support intervention which applied to entities from the auditorium culture sector came from various Anti-crisis and Financial shields, and made the Anti-Crisis Shield for Culture. It consisted of the following elements (Ministry of Culture and National Heritage (2021a):

1. **support for enterprises, non-governmental organisations, and self-employed persons** in the form of: the exemption from social security contributions; subsidies for micro and small entrepreneurs; co-financing from the Labour Fund of part of the costs of employee salaries and social security contributions due from these salaries; 3-month salary subsidy employees and payment of social security contributions; working capital loan financing the payment of wages in the SME sector; the cancellation of tax arrears; the possibility of deducting the loss from the current year from the income for the previous year; low-interest loan from the Labour Fund for micro-entrepreneurs up to the amount of 5 thousand PLN (1,28 thousand USD); triple (for three mounts) downtime benefit for entrepreneurs (persons running a business) in the amount of 2,08 thousand PLN (533 USD) or 1,3 thousand PLN (333 USD) each; an additional downtime benefit for employees of the auditorium culture sector (from October 15th, 2020) (solutions included in versions of the anti-crisis shields from Shield 1.0, i.e. from March 31st, 2020);
2. **compensation for persons under civil law contracts** in a situation where the contract has not been concluded or where there has been a limitation in its implementation due to a downtime in business as a result of COVID-19. The source of the payment was the Social Security Institution [Pol. *Zakład Ubezpieczeń Społecznych*, ZUS] (Anti-crisis shield 1.0, i.e. from March 31st, 2020);

3. **vouchers for culture** – cultural institutions and enterprises in the culture sector could change unrealised services into vouchers of a corresponding value (Anti-crisis shield 1.0, i.e. from March 31st, 2020);
 4. **support for the caretakers of the objects from the List of Historic Monuments (Poland) and the sites of the UNESCO World Heritage** – the possibility of applying for co-financing of salaries of persons employed by the entity managing the Historic Monument or the UNESCO World Heritage sites from the resources of the Guaranteed Employee Benefits Fund [Pol. *Fundusz Gwarantowanych Świadczeń Pracowniczych*, FGŚP] (Anti-crisis Shield 3.0, i.e. from May 16th, 2020);
 5. **subsidies to remuneration in cultural institutions** – support from the Guaranteed Employee Benefits Fund (FGŚP) for co-financing the remuneration of employees affected by the economic downtime or reduced working hours as a result of a pandemic in cultural institutions which were running by the state, local governments, and which were co-led (Anti-crisis Shield 4.0, i.e. from June 24th, 2020);
 6. **working capital loans with reduced interest rates** – with support in the form of an interest rate subsidy from the state budget (Anti-crisis shield 4.0, i.e., from June 24th, 2020);
 7. **aid in the form of subsidies** for micro-enterprises and in the form of subsidies to uncovered fixed costs for small and medium-sized enterprises from selected industries (Financial Shield 2.0, i.e. from April 18th, 2020);
 8. **compensation of lost income** – financial aid of 400 million PLN (102,6 million USD) directed to the culture sector from the Culture Support Fund [Pol. *Fundusz Wspierania Kultury*]. In its assumptions, the purpose of the mechanism was to ensure the stable functioning of the institution and to maintain the current employment in the culture sector. Payments from the fund took the form of compensations for income lost due to the epidemic in the period from March 12th to December 31st, 2020. The tool was addressed to local-government artistic institutions, non-governmental organisations, and entrepreneurs conducting cultural activities in the field of theatre, music, and dance (Anti-crisis shield 5.0, i.e. from October 8th, 2020);
 9. **legislative support for the film industry** – a change of the definition of the ‘film work’ (change of the provision, indicating that a film is also a work that has not been shown in the cinema, suspension of data reporting by cinemas, changes to the act on financial support for audiovisual production²⁷ – from March 31st, 2020);
 10. **direct support for the film industry** – the Minister of Culture and National Heritage transferred to the Polish Film Institute [Pol. *Polski Instytut Sztuki Filmowej*, PIFS] at the request of its director 120 million PLN (30,7 million USD) in order to finance or co-finance the costs incurred by entities operating in the field of cinematography from November 1st, 2020, to April 30th, 2021, as a result of COVID-19, and which have not been financed or co-financed from other funds, including public funds. This included the possibility of granting funds by the PIFS to entities operating in the field of cinematography, regardless of the organisational and legal form and ownership structure, in the form of a grant, a loan, or a surety, and in the form of a scholarship to a natural person (Anti-crisis Shield 6.0, i.e. from January 26th, 2021).
- In addition to the mechanisms resulting from individual types and versions of Anti-crisis and Financial shields financed from the COVID-19 Countermeasure Fund, during the first year of the pandemic, support mechanisms were offered from the state budget funds at the disposal of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage (Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, 2021b), namely:

²⁷ *The Act of November 9th, 2018, on financial support for audiovisual production* (Journal of Laws of no. 2019, item 50).

- 1) **Culture in the Web** – a programme of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage (MKiDN) announced on April 3rd, 2020, and managed by the National Centre for Culture [Pol. *Narodowe Centrum Kultury*], worth 80 million PLN (20,5 million USD), for activities related to the presentation of cultural events and online access to cultural resources. The programme consisted of two elements, i.e. a scholarship programme (worth 20 million PLN (5,1 mln USD)) and a grant programme (worth 60 million PLN (15,4 million PLN)). The scholarship programme was targeted at natural persons, creators, and artists. Applicants could be awarded scholarships for a period from 3 to 6 months for the projects to realisation in the period from May 1st, 2020, to October 31st, 2020 (the amount of the scholarship: 3 thousand PLN (769 USD) per month²⁸). The following entities could apply for a subsidy: local-government cultural institutions, non-governmental organisations, foundations, churches and religious associations, as well as entities conducting an economic activity (the amount of subsidy could be between 5 and 150 thousand PLN (1,28–384 thousand USD) and it could be up to 100% of the cost of the task)²⁹. Calls for grant applications and scholarships took place from 6th to 21st April, 2020. The implementation of tasks took place from May 1st, 2020, to October 30th, 2020 (NCK, 2020a; NCK, 2020b; MKiDN, 2020b);
- 2) **social assistance from the Culture Promotion Fund**, which could be obtained by authors and artists in a difficult financial situation (approx. 80% of the minimum wage);
- 3) **the modification of the Minister's 2020 Programmes** in terms of the implementation of projects that have already received a subsidy, allowing for the flexible introduction of changes in projects and their adaptation to a pandemic situation;
- 4) **increasing the budget of 'The Minister of Culture and National Heritage's Competition for creative scholarships and scholarships in the field of promoting culture'**, aimed at supporting the individual development of creators, artists, animators, and educators, as well as researchers of the broadly understood sphere of culture and national heritage – from 1,5 million PLN (384 thousand USD) to 6,5 million PLN (1,66 million USD)³⁰;

²⁸ The Minister of Culture and National Heritage granted 2,223 artists and creators with the scholarships in the amount of 9 thousand PLN (2,3 thousand USD). The number of scholarships awarded in specific industries was as follows: music (743), visual arts (499), animation and cultural education (419), literature (160), film (110), theater (101), folk art (86), dance (57), cultural management and support for the development of cultural personnel (48). The number of applicants was 4,370 (formally correct applications) (Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, 2020b).

²⁹ Grants were received by 1,182 beneficiaries. The competition was adjudicated on May 15th, 2020 (Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, 2020b).

³⁰ State budget scholarship programmes: Competition for creative scholarships and scholarships in the field of promoting culture; *Thesaurus Poloniae* – a programme implemented in two categories: Senior Programme for professors and academic lecturers with a doctoral degree and Junior Programme for PhD students; Scholarships of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage for the artistic achievements for art schools' students educating themselves in the artistic profession who have achieved very good results in science and are winners of national or international competitions; Scholarships of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage for students; international artistic scholarships implemented on the basis of bilateral Programmes for the Cultural and Scientific Cooperation. Legal bases for the functioning of these programmes: *Regulation of the Minister of KiDN of May 24th, 2012, on the detailed rules and procedure for granting scholarships to persons involved in artistic creation, promotion of culture and care of monuments, and the amount of these scholarships* (Journal of Laws of 2012, item 612); *Act of July 27th, 2005, Law on Higher Education* (Journal of Laws no. 164, item 1365, as amended); *Ordinance of the Minister of Science and Higher Education of August 16th, 2006, on detailed the conditions and procedure for granting and paying the minister's scholarship for academic achievements and the minister's scholarship for outstanding sports achievements* (Journal of Laws no. 153, item 1093).

- 5) **increasing the budget of the ‘Film Production Programme’** by approximately 40 million PLN (10,2 million USD) from the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage funds. The programme has been implemented by the PIFS;
- 6) **additional subsidies, the so-called COVID-19 payments** for the activities of cultural institutions in connection with reducing the negative economic and social effects of the pandemic – worth 140 million PLN (35,9 million USD);
- 7) **the shield for writers** – a programme organised by the Institute of Literature, under which 2,3 million PLN (590 thousand USD) was allocated to support authors by purchasing licences for previously published or premiere texts: poems and short stories as well as critical sketches and translations.

Additionally, the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage has undertaken a number of initiatives in the existing sectoral mechanisms: they applied to the European Union for a derogation allowing the VAT rate to be changed to 0 for printed books; they intensified work on the act on the rights of a professional artist; they designed a special programme of the post-pandemic revival of cultural activity and compensated for some of the losses suffered by the culture sector through the introduced restrictions (budget 50 million PLN); they maintained the level of subsidies for cultural institutions, of which they are organisers and co-organisers³¹; they amended the state budget to ensure that the above-mentioned cultural institutions are compensated for losses related to restrictions on their activities; and they introduced the possibility for directors of cultural institutions to pay additional remuneration for artists for “substitute” work carried out outside the seat of the institution on the basis of the interpretation of Art. 31a, paragraph. 1 of the Act of October 25th, 1991, on organising and conducting cultural activities (Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, 2021c).

³¹ I.e. for 120 cultural institutions (museums and artistic institutions) (Redakcja *wPolityce.pl*, 2021).

Environmental institutions offered the following aid instruments aimed at helping artists and creators as well as cultural organisers (Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, 2021d):

- 1) the **Adam Mickiewicz Institute** – ‘The Polish Culture in the World Programme’ was addressed to artists of all fields of art and creative industries as well as people involved in the dissemination and promotion of the Polish culture, supporting individual participation in events outside the country, including online ones. Electronic directory: *Partners in Culture*;
- 2) the **Institute of Music and Dance** – psychological advice for musicians and dancers; law advice; knowledge base on the possibilities of obtaining support; Professional Dancers Retraining Programme;
- 3) the **Zbigniew Raszewski Theatre Institute** – support for theatres that will present their activities under the banner of the Public Theatre Day on the Internet³²; advising on the protection of authors’ rights and aid programmes;
- 4) the **National Institute of Museology and Collection Protection** – a review of grant competitions;
- 5) the **Polish Radio National Symphony Orchestra** – support for local artists/musicians/performers representing various musical disciplines and types by providing them with opportunities to work; concert and performance fees for concerts in the open air;
- 6) the **Polish Music Foundation** – action directed to the organisers of live broadcast music events online or the premieres and retransmissions of previously recorded materials;
- 7) the **Polish Musical Publishers** [Pol. *Polskie Wydawnictwa Muzyczne*] – a project called TUTTI.pl aimed at supporting the performance

³² Support in the amount of 7 thousand PLN (1,8 thousand USD) was given to 103 public theatres in Poland (drama, music, puppet theatres). The funds were to be allocated for employees of theatres working on the presentation of theatres on the Internet as part of the Public Theatre Day (Instytut Teatralny, 2021).

of the Polish music; a discount of 70% of the fee for borrowing performance materials;

- 8) **the Association of Artists & Performers of musical and verbal-musical works 'SAWP'** – advance payment towards future royalties; loans granted for 1 year with the possibility of extension; non-returnable, one-off, permanent, or timely aid payments for performers who are members of the SAWP in difficult life or professional situations;
- 9) **the Copyright Polska Authors and Publishers Association** – distributing and paying Polish publishers the revenues from rights accumulated in 2019 – over 8,27 million PLN (2,12 million USD) for national book publishers, music, and cartographic prints and press publishers;
- 10) **the ZAiKS Authors' Association** – scholarships and grants from the Creative Support Fund;
- 11) **the Literary Union** – social support (1 thousand PLN (256 USD)) for writers who found themselves in a difficult financial situation as a result of the pandemic;
- 12) **the Zachęta – National Gallery of Art** – the transformations of projects implemented as part of the *Visual Arts* programme, taking place in galleries, museums, and various other spaces into those that could be implemented *online*;
- 13) **the Association of Polish Stage Artists** – help for artists who are not employed full-time and who find themselves in the most difficult life situation;
- 14) **the STOART Artists' Union** – the promotion of the artistic activity of the members of the organisation; one-off non-returnable allowances (up to 2,5 thousand PLN (641 USD)) granted to STOART members in a difficult life situation.

Support for the auditorium culture sector was also offered by individual local governments at the level of communes, poviats, and voivodships (see Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, 2021e). The examples include:

- 1) **the City of Gdańsk** – 'Cultural Scholarship of the City of Gdańsk' paid monthly in the amount of 2,6 thousand PLN (666 USD) gross for a creative process lasting up to 6 months, total budget of 700 thousand PLN (180 thousand USD) (Urząd Miasta Gdańska, 2020); small grants for NGO's (10 thousand PLN (2,5 thousand USD) each); the Gdańsk Publishing Fund – purchase of the book and music-related publications (publications about Gdańsk and Pomerania, the broadly understood humanities, books for children);
- 2) **the City of Gdynia** – 'The Breakwater for Culture' programme created from two pillars: 'Gdynia Culture joins forces' and support for NGO's; competitions for art projects and cultural activities in the city; legal advice on the implementation of cultural projects during the epidemic (Redakcja portalu *Gdynia.pl*, 2020);
- 3) **the City of Katowice** – 'The Katowice Package for Culture' as a support programme for Katowice-based cultural creators, non-governmental organisations, and other entities operating in the field of culture, with a budget of 0,5 million PLN (128 thousand USD). The mechanism included – among others exemptions from rent and rubbish fees for entities conducting cultural activity in municipal premises and financial cooperation with the city – the enabling of the implementation of tasks online or at a later date. The 'Katowice Entrepreneur Package 2.0+' programme – exemptions from rent payments, exemptions from lease payments, redemption, spreading into instalments or deferring the deadline for paying real estate tax at the individual request of the entrepreneur, exemptions from fees for waste disposal (Urząd Miasta Katowice, 2020; Romańczyk, 2020);
- 4) **the City of Kraków** – a package of activities supporting the 'Resilient Culture' programme worth 12 million PLN (3 million USD). The intervention and support were provided to both individual authors and animators as well as

non-governmental organisations, institutions, representatives of the most important creative sectors, including music and audiovisual producers, the visual arts sector, the film sector, and the book industry (Miasto Kraków, 2020); purchase of works worth 250 thousand PLN (64 thousand USD) – creative activities were purchased (not yet presented, not published or disseminated) in the field of artistic creation and activities related to the promotion of culture, in particular: visual arts, film, theatre, music, dance, literature, animation culture, and cultural and artistic education (Krakowskie Forum Kultury, 2020);

5) **the City of Łódź** – the ‘Healthy Culture’ programme based on three pillars: ‘Grants for culture – Łódź supports artists’ (500 thousand PLN (128 thousand USD)), ‘Cultugrants 2.0’ – a programme of the Łódź Event Centre (1 million PLN (256 thousand USD)), ‘Culture Pass and rent for 1 PLN’ per month for April and May 2020 in municipal commercial premises for creative studios (institutions, clubs, companies, and creators related to culture) (Macias, 2020);

6) **the City of Poznań** – the ‘Poznań Supports’ package consisting of the ‘Take-away Culture’ competition, additional recruitment for small grants, creative scholarship programme, solidarity programmes, cultural environment research (Urząd Miasta Poznania, 2020);

7) **the City of Sopot** – cultural grants awarded by the city in 2020 were not withheld (postponing deadlines, transferring the implementation method to the Internet), scholarships for individual authors up to 5 thousand PLN (1,28 thousand USD), maintaining orders for publications, lowering the costs of the studios (amount for monthly rent in May: 1 PLN per m²), subsidies for cultural institutions, legal emergency for artists (Urząd Miasta Sopotu, 2020a); the ‘Book on the phone’ action – purchase of books by the city for libraries in local bookstores (Urząd Miasta Sopotu, 2020b);

8) **the City of Warsaw** – the ‘Mobile in Culture’ programme (1 million PLN (256 thousand USD)) – competition of offers for non-governmental organisations to support people of culture. The ‘Favourite bookstore in Warsaw’ programme – an initiative dedicated to individual and stationary bookstores and/or second-hand bookstores (prize pool of 40 thousand PLN (10,2 thousand USD));

9) **the City of Wrocław** – the ‘Wrocław Publishing Programme’ – supporting literacy works of Wrocław-based authors at the stage of their creation and in the process of making it available to the public – the total budgeted was 132 thousand PLN (33,8 thousand USD); one-time aid for one artist – 2,2 thousand PLN (564 USD) gross (Culture Zone Wrocław, 2021); the Wrocław Social Intervention Programme – artists who rented their studios from the city for activities related to culture and art, from March 13th, 2020 until the end of the epidemic paid a symbolic rent (1% of the fees from before the pandemic). The package of scholarships for artists was extended in 2020. The total amount of planned and new funds allocated for this purpose was approximately 1.4 million PLN (359 thousand USD) (Redakcja www.wroclaw.pl, 2020);

10) **the Pomorskie Voivodeship** – scholarships for creators of culture from the budget of the voivodeship government (for people involved in artistic creation, the promotion of culture, the care of historic monuments) in the maximum amount of 5 thousand PLN (1,28 thousand USD) gross (paid once) – the total competition budget was 200 thousand PLN (51,3 thousand USD) (Samorząd Województwa Pomorskiego, 2020).

The above aid mechanisms were supported by the EU offer under the *Creatives Unite* platform, with loan guarantees for the creative sector offered by the Polish Development Bank [Pol. *Bank Gospodarstwa Krajowego*, BGK] and liquidity loans for entrepreneurs from the European Regional

Development Fund (ERDF) (Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, 2021f).

In addition, on April 27th, 2020, the Council of Ministers adopted the *Ad hoc Support Programme for NGOs in the field of counteracting the effects of COVID-19*, worth 10 million PLN (2,56 million USD), as a mechanism to support the institutional existence of civil-society organisations and their activities related to counteracting COVID-19³³. The programme manager was the National Institute of Freedom – Centre for Civil Society Development (Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, 2021h)³⁴.

Art colleges have also taken action in response to the pandemic. They offered help in various forms for students, doctoral candidates, and academic staff³⁵ (Ministry of Culture and National Heritage (2021i).

³³ *Resolution No. 48/2020 of the Council of Ministers of April 27th, 2020 on the adoption of a programme to support the development of civil society called "Ad hoc support programme for non-governmental organisations in counteracting the effects of COVID-19"* (RM-111-47-20); *Act of March 2nd, 2020, on special solutions related to the prevention, counteraction and combating of COVID-19, other infectious diseases and crisis situations caused by them* (Journal of Laws of 2020, item 374, as amended); *Act of September 15th, 2017, on the National Freedom Institute – Centre for Civil Society Development* (Journal of Laws no. 2017, item 1909, as amended).

³⁴ It envisaged the following priorities: supporting activities as a supplement to the tasks of public administration, the aim of which was to counteract COVID-19 in local communities and the safety of NGOs, including the implementation of activities that had to be stopped by the epidemic, the implementation of activities that would enable the organisation to continue to function and purchase the equipment and materials necessary for the implementation of the above activities, as well as renting a seat or premises for the implementation of activities. The maximum amount of subsidy in the first priority was 50 thousand PLN, and in the second – 40 thousand PLN (NIW, 2021).

³⁵ It took the form of student allowances, deferred payments for educational services, and payments for using the Student Dormitory, as well as psychological support, reductions and exemptions from fees, etc. The value of one-time support was from 1 thousand PLN to

Conclusion

From the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the government of the Republic of Poland included the operations of the entities in the auditorium culture sector in the spectrum of activities potentially threatening public health and creating a risk of negative impact on the achievement of the goals and results of the anti-pandemic policy. Hence, during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, it led the policy of lockdowns, restrictions, periods of reopening of this sector, and state aid. This policy could be, in general, named *the policy for the hibernation of the auditorium culture sector*. Public authorities in Poland wanted the institutions, enterprises, and creators in the auditorium culture sector to survive the pandemic period, because they took action aimed at it (behavioural evidence).

It is significant that the monitoring done by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage confirmed that the auditorium culture institutions operating under the sanitary regime were not sources of COVID-19 outbreaks during the defrosting and reopening periods in the first year of the pandemic. This is an important piece of evidence for any next epidemic situation. When organising the work of the entities in the auditorium culture sector in an epidemic situation, one should remember about the sanitary regime (distances, masks, disinfection, clean air) and about the fact that the risk differs in different types of institutions – the situation in a museum is not equal to that of a theatre, and the situation in one specific cinema differs from that in another cinema.

- 1) The most important conclusions of the conducted analysis are as follows:
- 2) In the Republic of Poland during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, seven phases of the Polish government's policy towards the auditorium culture sector as an element of its anti-pandemic policy can be distinguished.

2 thousand PLN (from 256 USD to 512 USD) (Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, 2021i).

- 3) From March 13th, 2020, the government of the Republic of Poland introduced a complete ban on the activity of entities in the auditorium culture sector and directed state aid to the sector as part of aid for the entire economy starting from March 31st, 2020 (Anti-Crisis Shield 1.0, and then further intervention tools).
- 4) The Polish government implemented two types of state aid for the auditorium culture sector: firstly, mostly through the model of the universal distribution of public funds, and secondly, through the selective model of distributing public funds.
- 5) The aid for the institutions and creators in the auditorium culture sector in Poland during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic was provided by the central government, local governments, non-governmental organisations (sectoral NGO's), public cultural institutions, and artistic schools.

The authors formulated the following recommendations as to what needs to be done:

- 1) conducting a full assessment and evaluation of the intervention taken in the auditorium culture sector;
- 2) improving the mechanisms of crisis management (especially for pandemic situation) and the mechanism of coordination of public decisions taken at all levels of implementing policies towards the auditorium culture sector;
- 3) designing scenarios of responses to various types of threats, fitted with reactive instruments, the roles of institutions, and individual state services;
- 4) developing guidelines addressed to all participants of the process of providing services in the auditorium culture sector, guaranteeing the safety of providing such services also during the disclosure of a threat comparable in its socio-economic effects to the COVID-19 pandemic;
- 5) establishing a Crises Council by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage, which would monitor and work out adequate solutions related to all types of threats in the area of culture and national heritage, and which would be in constant contact and communication with cultural institutions, organisations, enterprises, and creators.

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