

History of the Ministry of Culture

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When the state administration system of the new Republic of Latvia was being created in 1919, governance of the cultural and art processes were entrusted to the Ministry of Education. Latvia adopted the system designed by the Ministry of Education of Sweden introduced also in Estonia, Lithuania and Finland of not having a separate Ministry of Culture as well.

The Ministry of Education of the Republic of Latvia functioned from 23 July 1919 to 1940. In the meeting of 2 October 1919, the Cabinet of Ministers established the Art and Cultural Department with the Theatre and Literature, Musical and Painting Divisions. The first head of the Department was Jānis Akuraters (from 02.10.1919) followed by Rainis (from 14.04.1920) and Pāvils Rozītis (from 10.12.1920). The Archive and Library Division was later added to the Department. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was took responsibility for popularisation of culture abroad.

The Cultural Fund – the first institution of this type in the Baltic States was established on 18 November 1920. The Monument Board started its operation on 15 June 1923.

The Ministry of Culture as a separate state administration institution was founded on 15 May 1953 - during the Soviet occupation. The Ministry of Culture was located on the premises of the former and current Embassy of Russia at 2 Antonijas iela. During this time Jānis Ostrovs (1953–1958), Voldemārs Kalpiņš (1958–1961), Vladimirs Kaupužs (1962–1986), Jāzeps Barkāns (1986–1988) un Ivars Ķezbers (1988) were appointed as Ministers for Culture. Raimonds Pauls became the last Minister of Culture of the Soviet Occupation time and the first *de facto* Minister of Culture of the restored Republic of Latvia.

Ministers for Culture

Jānis Ostrovs (1953–1958)

Voldemārs Kalpiņš (1958–1961)

Vladimirs Kaupužs (1962–1986)

Jāzeps Barkāns (1986–1988)

Ivars Ķezbers (1988)

Raimonds Pauls (1989–1993)

As a result of the changes in the state administration, the Ministry of Culture was merged with the Ministry of Education in August of 1993. Raimonds Pauls resigned from the offered position of the State Minister as a protest against it. He was replaced by Jānis Dripe who was able to promote the renewal of the Ministry of Culture already in a year – in November of 1994.

Jānis Dripe (1994–1995)

Ojārs Spārītis (1995–1996)

Rihards Pīks (1996–1997)

Ramona Umblīja (1997–1998)

Karina Pētersone (1998–2002)

Ingūna Rībena (2002–2004)

Helēna Demakova (2004–2009)

Ints Dālderis (2009–2010)

Sarmīte Ēlerte (2010–2011)

Žaneta Jaunzeme-Grende (2011–2013)

Dace Melbārde (2013-2019)

Nauris Puntulis (2019-)

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