

# Cultural policy promotes arts and culture



Finland's cultural policy aims to promote arts and culture, creative work and economy, cultural diversity as well as availability and accessibility of culture and information. It also aims to foster cultural heritage. The Constitution of Finland guarantees the freedom of the arts and the right to one's own language and culture and gives everyone the responsibility for the environment and the cultural heritage.

**Cultural policy** is implemented by the state and the municipalities. They contribute fairly equal shares to the financing of arts and culture, while regional administration has no significant financing responsibilities. Although foundations finance different kinds of projects in arts and culture, private financing overall is fairly rare in Finland. Non-governmental organisations are active in arts and culture, which influences cultural trends and policies.

The state responsibilities in the field of cultural policy include legislation, funding decisions, strategic and other guidance as well as the creation of favourable conditions for arts and culture.

The Finnish municipalities have extensive self-government and a general responsibility to advance arts and culture. They promote arts and culture in people's lives for example by providing grants and facilities as well as by organising activities. They also maintain arts and

cultural institutions.

All municipalities have a library and most of them have a museum, but only the larger municipalities have a theatre and an orchestra. The state grants statutory and discretionary government transfers to municipalities help them to finance general cultural activities as well as theatres, orchestras and museums. Non-governmental organisations and other actors in the field can apply for discretionary government transfers.

## **DUTIES OF THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE**

The Ministry of Education and Culture has the main responsibility for the Finnish cultural policy. The Ministry's departments responsible for education policies deal with arts education and training, while the Department for Art and Cultural Policy performs other duties related to cultural policy.

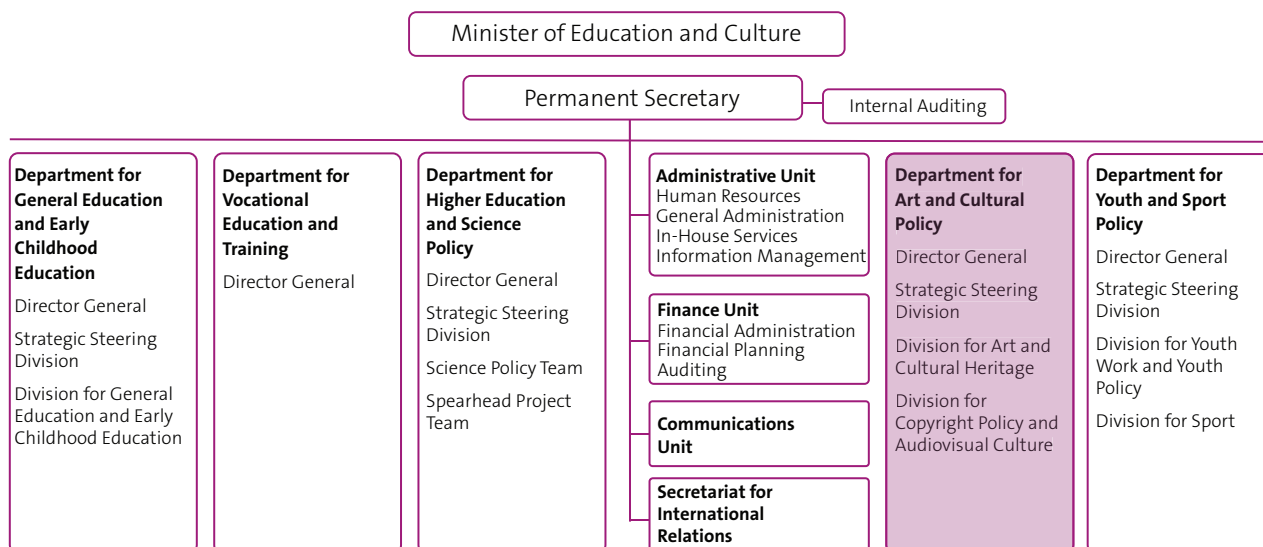
The Ministry used to have two ministers; one for education and research

## The state and the municipalities are equal actors in cultural policy

policy and the other for cultural, sport and youth policy. In the Government appointed in 2015 there is only one minister responsible for both areas, the Minister of Education and Culture.

There are several agencies operating under the Ministry, the three most important agencies being the Arts Promotion Centre, the National Board of Antiquities and the National Audiovisual Institute. The Arts Council of Finland, operating under the Arts Promotion Centre, distributes grants to artists based on peer reviews. The Ministry of Education and Culture has target agreements even with the Finnish Film Foundation, the Finnish National Gallery, the Finnish National Opera and the

# Ministry of Education and Culture



Finnish National Theatre, because these agencies receive most of their financing from the Budget.

Cultural policy has gained importance in society in the 2000s. This has diversified the field and the operations and practices of cultural policy and increased collaboration with other administrative branches. At the moment one of the biggest issues is the digitalisation development.

The Ministry of Education and Culture is not the only ministry with duties concerning cultural policy: In cultural heritage the Ministry of Education and Culture shares some duties with the Ministry of the Environment (cultural environment) and in audiovisual policy (radio and TV broadcasting) with the Ministry of Transport and Communications. Creative economy is promoted in collaboration with the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment in particular, while the impacts of arts and culture on wellbeing are promoted together with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.

## CULTURAL POLICY GUIDANCE

Cultural policy has developed steadily in Finland, and various government coalitions have not made any great changes to key development trends. Each government has, naturally, its own priority areas, and in the current government programme they are

promoted through so-called key projects.

There is only one key project in the government programme concerning arts and culture. It aims to improve access to basic education and children's culture across the country by organising recreational activities as part of school activities. In addition, more services from different areas of arts and culture will be offered, and they will be increasingly taken advantage of in the care and customer services provided by social and healthcare services (hospitals, services for older people, and child welfare, for example). The aim is to promote the beneficial effects art has on wellbeing.

The field of arts and culture is very broad, and therefore there is no one piece of legislation covering the whole sector. Instead there are several acts and decrees that guide and regulate operations in arts and culture, such as the Library Act, the Museums Act, the Theatres and Orchestras Act, and the Municipal Cultural Activities Act. There are also separate acts that regulate the operations of the agencies in the field. The guidance tools used in the sector include legislation, budget funds as well as information and performance guidance in accordance with strategic policies.

The Strategy for Cultural Policy of the Ministry of Education and Culture will be removed in 2016, extending to the year 2025. In the strategy, the target areas

of government cultural policy will be defined as creative work and production, inclusion and participation as well as cultural basis and continuity. These targets will also affect other decisions in the sector, such as the budget.

## IMPORTANCE OF CULTURE

Finland gained independence in 1917, and the centennial of Finland's independence will be celebrated in 2017. While the national cultural identity remains strong, there is also a lot of international activity in Finland. Finland is a geographically large country with a relatively small population. Nevertheless the network of arts and cultural institutions reaches all parts of the country.

Arts and culture give people new experiences, enjoyable moments and wellbeing. There is a lot of arts and culture available in Finland, and people take part in them fairly actively. Libraries have always been particularly popular in Finland, and cultural events are organised across the country especially in the summer.

Culture is making a growing contribution to the national economy. Its share of the Finnish GDP is around 3%, and it employs 4% of the workforce. Arts and culture account for about 5% of all consumption expenditure. Differences in statistical methods make international comparisons difficult. ●