

## COMPENDIUM SHORT PROFILE:

### FINLAND

(Prepared by Anna Kanerva, based on the detailed country profile of Ritva Mitchell and Anna Kanerva: [www.culturalpolicies.net/web/finland.php](http://www.culturalpolicies.net/web/finland.php); and an article by Anna Kanerva (2018): Finnish cultural policy - structures and governance at the national, regional and local level. In Kulturpolitisk styrning. Ansvarsfördelning och reformer inom de nordiska ländernas kulturpolitik under 2000-talet. Myndigheten för Kulturanalys.)

#### 1. Facts and figures

<b>Political system:</b>	Semi-presidential republic
<b>Year of membership to the Council of Europe:</b>	5 May 1989
<b>Year of membership to UNESCO:</b>	10 October 1956
<b>Population:</b>	5 514 997 (May 2018)
<b>Non-nationals of total population:</b>	4,5% (2017)
<b>Official language(s):</b>	Finnish and Swedish
<b>Share of population using the Internet</b>	88% (2017)
<b>Public cultural expenditure per capita:</b>	207 EUR (2015)
<b>GDP in Billion EUR:</b>	223,8 (2017)

#### Ratification of Key Cultural Conventions

- *European Cultural Convention* (1955): 23 January 1970
- *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* (1992): 1 March 1998
- *UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions* (2005): 18 December 2006

#### 2. Historical Perspective of Cultural Policy and recent Changes

Historically the main instruments of Finnish cultural policy have been:

- direct financial support for the arts, artists and artistic creativity, including extensive systems of cultural and arts education and professional training of artists
- extensive public or non-profit ownership and joint financing of cultural and art institutions by the central government and the municipalities. This includes state ownership and, until the end of 2012, licence-based (and from 2013 taxation-based) financing of the public service broadcasting company (the Finnish Broadcasting Company Ltd., YLE);
- modest subsidies to the culture industries, especially to the press and cinema, and;
- active international cultural co-operation, traditionally in the spirit of cultural diplomacy; and, more recently, increasingly in search of success in international trade of cultural goods and services.

The affirmation of national identity was originally the main cornerstone of Finnish cultural policy. Later, promotion of artistic creativity and artistic work has been the prime objective. In the 2000s the Ministry of Education and Culture has emphasized cultural policy's contribution to welfare, regional and innovation policies.

According to the Ministry of Education and Culture, the main aim of the Finnish current government's cultural policy is to promote creativity, plurality and inclusion.

The target areas and objectives for Finnish cultural policy (in the Ministry's Strategy for Cultural Policies 2017-2025) are:

- Creative work and production: improved conditions for artistic and creative work, diversified modes of production and distribution
- Inclusion and participation in arts and culture: increased participation in culture, narrowed differences in participation of different groups within the population
- Cultural basis and continuity: strong and viable foundations for culture

### 3. Overall description of the system

#### **General context**

The Finnish cultural policy model is defined by its strong institutional framework and a comprehensive legislative basis. Despite changes in national and international political and operational environments and the internal development of the arts and culture, the main features of the system have not changed significantly. The reliance on public ownership, budgets and legislation has guaranteed the stability of public funding for the arts and cultural services.

From the point of view of decision-making and administration the Finnish cultural policy model is a model of *horizontal and vertical decentralisation* and *arm's length implementation*.

#### **Division of tasks & main national actors in cultural policy**

The Finnish cultural policy system is simultaneously both strongly centralized and decentralized. The state and the municipalities share the responsibility in providing, financing and maintaining a regionally comprehensive system of cultural services. The local government is strong and autonomous while the regional level has been of marginal importance when it comes to cultural policy.

The Finnish government steers the implementation of cultural policy by means of legislation, the government programme and other policy instruments. In the Finnish cultural policy decision-making, Parliament has the final legislative and budgetary power, while the Government has the overall and coordinating executive powers of policy initiation, planning and implementation. Sector policy initiation, planning and implementation are the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Culture.

In Finnish cultural policy administration, a wide network of expert agencies and organizations are responsible for implementing national level cultural policies. The Ministry of Education and Culture produces and concludes performance agreements with the agencies and units under its administration. The main agencies are the National Board of Antiquities (main governmental expert body for the heritage sector and professional museum activities), the National Audiovisual Institute, the Governing Body of Suomenlinna (a UNESCO World Heritage Site), the Finnish Library for the Visually Impaired and the Arts Promotion Centre Finland.

The role of the expert agencies has strengthened in the 2000s, with the Ministry of Education and Culture delegating more responsibility to the arm's length bodies. One of the most significant reforms has been the establishing of the Arts Promotion Centre Finland, which started to operate in January 2013, replacing the former Arts Council of Finland. The idea behind re-organizing the system of arts councils was to increase the transparency of decision-making and the flexibility of the art form councils in correspondence to the new art forms.

Municipalities and local governments have a significant role in financing and organising arts and cultural provisions in Finland. Finnish municipalities are self-governing units, with a statutory service arranging responsibility, including the promotion of general cultural activities. Municipalities have the freedom to decide about the content and execution of their cultural services. The municipalities carry out their responsibilities by providing grants, maintaining and supporting arts and cultural organisations and making facilities available, as well as by providing opportunities for cultural and artistic activities.

One of significant features of the Finnish public sector administration has been the lack of autonomous regional level governance – in general and in relation to arts and culture. However, this regional structure is about to undergo a major change in the near future as the preparation and implementation of a health, social services and regional government reform is currently under way in Finland.

In arts and culture policy particularly, the main actors are the regional arts councils; there are currently (2017-2018) 13 regional arts councils in Finland.

There are no inter-governmental bodies in cultural policy-decision making and administration. As to public cultural services, the Association of the Finnish Local and Regional Authorities is an important intermediary between the central government, the regions and the municipalities.

*(Appendix 1: Organigram of the Finnish Cultural Policy administrative and decision making institutions)*

### **Financing of culture**

- In Finland, the public financing of arts and culture is divided between the state and municipalities. This mirrors the division of responsibilities between the two levels of administration.
- The main Finnish public financing system is the so-called *state's share system, or "VOS"* (the Finnish acronym for the system). The state participates in the funding of municipal cultural activities and in the costs of maintaining theatres, orchestras and museums by granting statutory state-subsidies and grants.
- The state is financially and administratively responsible for the national art and cultural institutions, for direct support for art and artists, for higher education in art and culture and for international relations. **Approximately EUR 500 million was allocated for the arts and culture in the 2017 State Budget. The budget for 2018 is EUR 460 million.**
- Municipalities maintain the infrastructure for local arts and culture activities, locally and partly regionally operating cultural and arts organisations, basic arts education and other cultural activities, such as events. The majority of the expenses (in a recent study of biggest Finnish municipalities, 75% of the budget),

at least in the biggest cities, is directed towards library services and arts and culture organisations (if present at the municipality).

- State subsidies for theatres, orchestras and museums are included in the Ministry of Education and Culture's main title of expenditure in the Budget. Since 2010, the State subsidies for municipal cultural activities, libraries and basic arts education have been included in the Ministry of Finance's basic public services budget.
- In Finland, arts and culture are also prominently financed by profits of the state owned lottery and sports betting company, Veikkaus. Around half of the EUR 500 million total state budget for arts and culture was funded by the Veikkaus proceeds in 2017. The Ministry of Education and Culture decides annually how the lottery and betting funds will be distributed.
- In Finland, it is difficult to get accurate, reliable and timely data on the share or the amount of the total municipal cultural funding in relation to the state funding because of the government transfer system and municipal differences in documenting expenses.
- **Public culture expenditure** in Finland per capita in 2015 was EUR 207. Culture's share of GDP was 2,9% in 2015.
- Culture's **share of consumption** was around 5% in 2015.

Source: Statistics Finland; Ministry of Education and Culture, Finland.

#### 4. Main cultural policies and priorities

##### ***General context***

In Finland the government programme sets the main agenda and policy guidelines for the government and it is accompanied by proposals of general and sector development programmes and projects. One of the current Finnish Centre-Conservative-Populist (2015-2019, Prime Minister Juha Sipilä) government key projects aims to improve the accessibility of arts and culture.

##### ***Latest developments:***

- The current government (2015-2019) programme's two main strands of cultural policy are children's culture and basic arts education as well as expanding the one-percent principle (of investing up to 1% of the construction costs of public buildings in the acquisition of works of art) to the social welfare and healthcare sector.
- The objective of supporting children's access to culture is to incorporate it into their daily lives, to support the creativity of children and young people, and to make art and culture easily accessible to all. The aim has been to expand cooperation between basic and early education providers and those providing basic art education, art and culture professionals, institutions and other actors, libraries and third-sector parties. One of the main actions so far has been a country-wide hearing on children's hobby wishes.
- To support the welfare impacts of the arts, the second of the central government cultural aims is to create a new approach linked to the one-percent rule to facilitate

the acquisition of art- and culture-based wellbeing services in the social welfare and healthcare sectors.

- Finland is currently preparing for a major reform in organising regional government into 18 autonomous counties, to be in operation in 2021. The purpose of the reform is to rationalise public-sector administration at the state, regional and municipal levels. One of the duties of the new counties is to promote the identity and culture of the regions. According to a government proposal (2017), this includes promoting intangible production, the creative economy and cultural tourism, managing cultural environments as well as coordinating plans and developing activities relating to culture. Culture is also seen as an integral part in promoting citizen welfare. At this point, it is still not clear how the reform will change and develop the roles, responsibilities and procedures, let alone resources relating to arts and culture in the counties.
- The renewing of the state's share system to performing arts and museums has been under way since 2016. The general aim has been to develop the system so that it will better take into account changes in the different fields of art and in society. The working group preparing the reform proposes changes to the current Theatres and Orchestras Act and Museums Act, by redefining the scope, objectives, purpose and criteria for government contributions. The proposal is currently (2018) in a consultation process and it is still not clear how the reform will actually be implemented.
- The Municipal Cultural Activities Act is currently (2017-2018) under revision. The aim of the legislative revision is to better support prerequisites for municipal cultural activities, citizen democracy and cultural basic rights in a changing operational environment. The basis of the legislation is to ensure equal access to cultural services.
- A working group set up by the Ministry of Education and Culture is currently preparing new guidelines and policy objectives for Finnish arts and artists' policy. The aim is to improve prerequisites for artistic activities and the steering and governance of art. The proposal should be ready at the end of September 2018.
- In recent years the Ministry of Education and Culture has aimed to develop its grant policies to be more strategic. The ministry established a working group (2014-2016) with a mandate to reform the discretionary government transfers for arts and culture. The aim is to base the grant decisions more strongly on the overall strategy for cultural policy.

## **5. International cooperation**

### ***General context and main actors***

The main ministries responsible for international cultural co-operation are the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Culture. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs controls and guides the overall "diplomacy aspects" of cultural co-operation. Among the tasks of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are also relations with international media and

cultural relations in respect to the Ministry's own activities and initiatives to make Finland better-known internationally.

The Ministry of Education and Culture is responsible for international cooperation exchange of arts and culture with and within the following organisations: UNESCO, the Council of Europe, the Nordic Council of Ministers and the Nordic Culture Fund, the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS), the Arctic Council, the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and their cultural bodies as well as their neighbouring areas.

Matters relating to international cooperation are prepared in the Ministry's sector divisions and in the Secretariat for International Relations. The main function of the Secretariat is monitoring, planning and co-ordinating international bilateral and multilateral relations jointly with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Most of the budget allocations of the Ministry of Education and Culture for international cultural co-operation are channelled to bilateral and multilateral activities. Export of cultural products and services has also been a major policy issue from the beginning of 2000s.

The National Board of Antiquities is responsible for international co-operation in the cultural heritage sector. All major cultural and art institutions, institutes of art education and many expert bodies maintain active international professional co-operation in their fields of work and are well linked to their respective European and wider international organisations and networks.

The Finnish membership of the EU has also decentralised administration and increased the independence of expert bodies, regional organisations and municipalities in international cultural co-operation.

### **European cooperation**

Since the 1970s, Finland has been active in most of the main cultural programmes of UNESCO, the Council of Europe and later the EU.

Nordic co-operation has a special position in Finnish international co-operation policies. Cultural cooperation is based on the agreement concerning cultural co-operation signed by the Nordic countries. Matters that are within the Ministry of Education and Culture's administration are discussed in the Nordic Council of Ministers for Culture and the Committee of Senior Civil Servants for Nordic Cultural Co-operation. Cooperation is carried out in areas in which the Nordic countries have common interests or challenges and in which cooperation improves the effectiveness of development. Finland is represented in the cultural and educational committees, working groups and steering groups that fall under the responsibility of the Nordic Council of Ministers, and it participates in the Nordic Cultural Fund.

The main emphasis of regional cooperation in the Baltic Sea region lies on strengthening the region's culture as well as developing its cultural heritage and cultural tourism. In the Barents region the status of culture in regional development is strengthened through dialogue between the creative industries and cultures. The Northern Dimension Partnership on Culture develops the networking possibilities, internationalisation and competitiveness of actors in the creative industries.

The Russia-programme in arts and culture provides funding to project cooperation. The Finnish-Russian Cultural Forum is a meeting place for networking and project cooperation. It also supports Finno-Ugric cultural cooperation with Russia.

The EU membership has opened new avenues for international cultural co-operation e.g. through different training and funding programmes. In Finland, the Finnish National Agency for Education and the Finnish Film Foundation work together as the contact point for the EU Creative Europe -programme.

Appendix 1:

