



The internationalisation of cultural life

Changes in the surrounding world have a strong impact on conditions for international cultural exchange and cooperation. Increasingly open national borders make it more difficult to draw a clear and simple distinction between national and international cultural activities.

The development and vitality of Swedish cultural life is dependent on international exchange and co-operation. As a result of this, an international perspective must permeate the activities of cultural institutions and action to promote internationalisation must be integrated into the infrastructure of cultural life and government grant systems.

Culture has assumed an increasingly important role in building relations with other countries in such fields as the promotion of Sweden, democracy promotion and development cooperation. The role of culture and the media for the development of democracy and freedom of expression is becoming increasingly clear. The consequence of this development is that the creators of culture both should, and must be given more scope in the international dialogue.

Internationalisation is a long-term cultural policy process. It was initiated in 2006 through the Government Communication The internationalisation of cultural life (Kulturlivets internationalisering) Govt. Comm. 2005/06:188. The objectives set apply until further notice, while the direction of concrete projects and cooperation is continually examined by the Government and the agencies concerned.

Objectives

1. *High quality, artistic integrity, a long-term perspective and reciprocity*

All provision of public funding relating to international cultural exchange and cooperation will be based on an assessment of artistic and cultural quality. This assessment will be made with respect for the demands of cultural life concerning professionalism in the conduct of activities and artistic integrity. Success in international cultural exchange requires perseverance and a long-term approach, based on a mutual interest.

2. *Swedish successes abroad*

Swedish cultural life has to strengthen its international position. Through an active cultural policy, the Government wants to help increase the demand for Swedish cultural institutions and artists to take part in professional cooperation abroad.

3. *International cultural meetings in Sweden*

Ethnic and cultural diversity are an important precondition for enabling more intercultural and international cultural meetings to take place in Sweden and other countries. Sweden must be more open to, and derive advantages from, influences from other countries and cultures. Internationalisation must benefit a broad audience.

4. *Deeper cooperation between different policy areas*

The cultural dimension of Sweden's international contacts will be strengthened and better use will be made of the opportunities for synergy between the objectives of cultural policy and foreign policy.

SEK 24 million in increased efforts for ethnic and cultural diversity and international cultural activities

In 2008, the Swedish Arts Council will receive an additional SEK 3 million for support to international cultural activities. Support for international exchanges of artists is to increase by SEK 4 million. An additional SEK 7 million in funding is proposed for translation support and international exchanges in the field of literature. To further promote ethnic and cultural diversity, the Government will provide an additional SEK 10 million from 2008.

Broader responsibility for the Swedish Arts Council

Based on the plan for international activities for the period 2007–2010 drawn up by the Swedish Arts Council, the main duties of the Council are to:

- work strategically for internationalisation throughout the cultural sector;
- conduct advanced international policy intelligence that is primarily aimed at making effective use of available grants;
- integrate an international perspective into all the grants provided by the Council;
- increase clarity on the conditions and criteria that apply to obtaining support for international cultural exchanges;
- identify and make the most of the value added and gains that can be made by pooling resources by strengthening cooperation with actors in other relevant policy areas, such as development assistance policy;

- produce easily accessible information on international cultural activities.

Strengthening international exchange on the basis of conditions for artists

The International Artists Studio Program in Sweden (IASPIS) in the Arts Grants Committee has developed international contacts in the field of visual arts. From 2006, experience from IASPIS activities has also been used to develop international exchange in the field of dance.

Using IASPIS as a model, the Arts Grants Committee's work on developing international exchanges in the various fields of art has continued. To further strengthen and broaden the Arts Grants Committee's efforts, the Government is contributing SEK 4 million in 2008 to international exchanges of artists.

Diversity is the future

Globalisation and migration has changed Sweden and the world. Culture has to reflect this reality and provide images of diversity within Sweden and elsewhere. These standpoints are central to the final report Diversity is the future (*Mångfald är framtiden*) (SOU 2007:50). In light of this report, the Government intends to prioritise efforts, through greater multicultural experiences, to develop international networks and artistic exchange using the skills that are to be found in Sweden. The report is now being circulated for comment, after which the proposals will be considered.

More effective action for Swedish film abroad

The Swedish Film Institute has drawn up a strategy for how Swedish films can have a greater impact internationally. The Swedish Film Institute's strategy includes greater cooperation with the Swedish film industry and more intensive contacts with major foreign film festivals and foreign press. The Swedish Film Institute and the Swedish Institute will also plan initiatives to promote Swedish films abroad. A rational division of labour between both these institutes will enable the presence of Swedish film to be strengthened internationally.

Pro-active measures to spread Swedish music and literature abroad

Central government funding of international exchanges and cooperation in the field of literature

will receive an additional SEK 7 million from 2008. The Swedish Arts Council will be given responsibility for supporting the translation of Swedish literature and developing international literary cooperation. Translation support will be extended to include non-fiction and, to a greater extent, literature for children and young people. Funding for international exchange activities for writers, translators, etc will also be increased.

Concerts Sweden and Export Music Sweden have been jointly instructed to intensify work to spread Swedish music around the world.

Counsellors for Cultural Affairs at Swedish embassies

The Counsellors for Cultural Affairs at Swedish embassies must have close links to institutions and activities in the cultural sector and must constitute a resource for the sector's internationalisation. The countries of posting will be continually examined so as to meet current cultural policy needs in the best possible way.

General action to promote Sweden

The Swedish Institute is tasked with promoting a positive image of Sweden, thereby helping to enhance understanding of Swedish foreign policy. Cultural activities are one of the most effective means in these areas. The Institute's contacts with Swedish cultural life will be developed further.

Cultural cooperation with developing countries

Cultural cooperation plays an important role in development cooperation and a significant proportion of central government support for international cultural exchange consists of development assistance funds. Cultural activities are to be based on quality, reciprocity and a long-term perspective.

The overall objective of cultural cooperation with developing countries will be to promote cultural diversity, strengthen human rights and democracy, increase mutual knowledge and dialogue and support the development of cultural infrastructure.

Sweden – an active international actor

Sweden seeks to be a strong actor in international organisations that affect the cultural sphere and so make a positive contribution to the development of Swedish and international cultural life.



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Fact sheet produced by the Ministry of Culture Printed by XGS Grafisk Service, Stockholm, Sweden, October 2007. Article no. Ku 07.013.