

COUNTRY PROFILES

Finland

Research into literature on Finland's approach to international cultural policy suggests that there is a very positive attitude towards cooperation with other European countries vis-à-vis the rest of the world, demonstrated most convincingly in its cooperation with the EU's Northern Dimension policy. In fact, an increase in European cultural coordination and cooperation would receive the support of Finland, as this country believes it is important to capitalise on cooperation networks and to increase joint projects. The most important reason for this seems to be that Finland is experiencing tight budget lines and it fears that as a result, it will not be able to respond to new challenges in trans-national cultural cooperation.

Finland believes that the delegations of the EU can play a role as brokers of initiatives, as centres of information, and in promoting cultural cooperation with third countries, thereby allowing the resources of the Member States to be used more effectively.

According to a report on European cultural and audiovisual policy⁶, a European strategy for cultural cooperation with third countries should, as far as Finland is concerned:

- reaffirm culture as a force of social and economic cohesion, especially for the small Member States;
- underline the cultural dimension of development for developing countries;
- promote culture as a resource for tackling social, educational and commercial problems in international cooperation;
- insist that cultural diversity is a resource and not a menace.

Finnish international cultural policy is the responsibility of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Culture. With regard to international cultural policy the former seems to play the more important role.

M i n i s t r y o f F o r e i g n a f f a i r s

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs promotes Finnish arts and culture abroad and has a say in all affairs of international cooperation that have wider political implications. Together with the Ministry of Education and Culture it is responsible for cultural agreements and bilateral treaties. With the Ministry of Education it also jointly coordinates and finances cooperation initiatives with neighbouring countries (Nordic Council of Ministers, Baltic and the Barents Sea Regions. The MFA's Department of Communication and Culture is responsible for:

- the promotion of Finland's foreign policy, trade, economic and development policy by means of Finnish culture and communications;
- making Finland known by producing, acquiring and distributing related information;
- Finland's international media and cultural relations.

Its key actors are Finnish embassies and consulates, almost one hundred in all. The MFA's Department for Development Cooperation also promotes cultural cooperation projects. It views culture as "an across the board resource for development; something that defines values, customs and social institutions, a cornerstone of security and stimuli, a remedy for human challenges and problems, typified by continuous change."⁷

M i n i s t r y o f E d u c a t i o n a n d C u l t u r e

The Ministry of Education and Culture has established a Secretariat for International Relations that is responsible for the management of bilateral and multilateral cooperation based on bilateral

cultural agreements, cultural exchange programmes and bilateral funds (forty-five countries), conventions and membership of international organisations. The Ministry supports numerous state institutions, bodies and organisations that take part in cultural exchanges and promote Finnish culture abroad, and finances sixteen cultural and scientific institutes abroad.

The Ministry also funds the Arts Council of Finland that advises the Ministry on international cultural policy and participates in Ars Baltica.

The Ministry's Centre for International Mobility is in charge of the EU education, training and youth programmes, and acts as the Cultural Contact Point for the EU Culture 2000 framework programme.

P o l i c y f o c u s

Finnish international cultural relations pursue an explicit policy of public diplomacy that is meant to support the attainment of Finland's goals either directly through publicity or by increasing Finnish identity and esteem. Cultural exports hold an important position in the Foreign Ministry's public diplomacy both as a goal and an instrument.⁸

Furthermore, it stresses the need to enhance the international visibility of Finnish quality culture and to increase knowledge of other cultures in Finland in order to promote multiculturalism.

G e o g r a p h i c a l f o c u s

Geographically Finland's international cultural policy is focused within EU and neighbouring non-EU countries particularly those countries that form northern and Baltic partnerships.

The Ministry of Education's strategy paper for 2015 contains a chapter on "Diversifying Finland's international influence."⁹ It states that Finland needs to cooperate within the Nordic Council of Ministers, the Barents Euro-Artic Council, the Arctic Council and the Baltic Sea Council in order to secure the implementation of the EU's Northern Dimension policy.

Finland claims that close cooperation with Estonia will continue and that cooperation with Russia has a special place in Finnish relations.

In total, Finland has bilateral cultural agreements with thirty-four countries and memoranda of understanding with six countries. Finland also has a network of cultural institutes in fifteen countries that reflect the above stated geographical focus, for example:

Finland has cultural institutes in eleven EU countries: Denmark (Copenhagen), Sweden (Stockholm), Estonia (Tallinn and Tartu), Germany (Berlin), Belgium (Antwerp), United Kingdom (London), France (Paris), Spain (Madrid), Italy (Rome), Greece (Athens) and Hungary (Budapest).

Finland also has four cultural institutes in neighbouring non-EU countries including in Norway (Oslo), Russia (Benelux and St. Petersburg) and Syria (Damascus).

Finland has only one cultural institute in the United States (New York) and one in Japan (Tokyo).

Finland's development policy is focussed on sub-Saharan Africa.

S e l e c t e d r e a d i n g

Barbier Frinault et Associates and Ernst & Young France Consultancy, Study of the External Cooperation of the European Union and its Member States in culture and audiovisual sectors. Summary,

E-Doc Link: http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/avpolicy/stat/2002/5770_barbier/58-02-summary_en.pdf

This study presents and analyses external cooperation in the culture and audiovisual sectors of a number of states (including Finland) and European institutions with third countries. New

Member States and candidate countries for European Union membership are excluded from the category of "third" countries.

Adams, T., P. Ahonen and R. Fisher (2004) An international evaluation of the Finnish System of Arts Councils,

E-Doc Link: <http://www.minedu.fi/julkaisut/kulttuuri/2004/opm3/AnInternational.pdf>

Publication of the Finnish Ministry of Education. This report presents the findings and recommendations of an international team of experts, appointed by the Finnish Ministry of Education, to evaluate the Finnish system of Arts Councils (the Central Arts Council, State Artform Councils, the Regional Arts Councils). The main task of the evaluation was to assess the appropriateness and efficiency of existing structural solutions in delivering support for artists and art and to consider whether the system should be strengthened towards more of a decision-making instrument in the field of Finnish arts policy. The team finds the absence of long-term goals and the unclear division of labour within the Arts Council system and between the Ministry of Education and the cultural field especially problematic. With the Regional Arts Councils (RAC's), more attention should be paid to the lack of systematic contact with Regional Authorities and the modest funds that they have for supporting artists. The team suggests of setting up a high level cultural commission to provide advice on the development of arts and cultural policies in a broader framework of governance.

Anttila, R., (2003) Foreign Cultural Policy in Europe: The Case of Finland,

E-Doc Link: http://www.ifa.de/europa-akp/konferenz/download/eu_anttila.pdf

Finnish contribution to the conference "Europe-a Union of Culture?" of the German Institut fuer Auslandsbeziehungen, Berlin, October 2003. Includes abstract.

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State of the art of cultural export in relation to the future of Finnish cultural, political and economical development. ISBN: 952-442-886-5.

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E-Doc Link: <http://www.minedu.fi/julkaisut/hallinto/2003/opm35/opm35.pdf>

Ministry of Education (and culture) strategy paper.

F u r t h e r b a c k g r o u n d r e a d i n g

EFAH, Interarts (2003) Study on cultural cooperation in Europe: Annex 1 - National reports – Finland,

E-Doc Link: http://europa.eu.int/comm/culture/eac/sources_info/pdf-word/annex1_national_reports1.pdf

Background to structures, competencies and institutes in the field of cultural cooperation.

Kohvakka, R., M. Huttunen (1997) Audio-visual production and international co-productions in Finland., Helsinki, Statistics Finland. (Culture and the media)., ISBN: 951-727-288-X, Europe

No abstract available.

Mitchell, Ritva, Ilkka Heiskanen (2005) Chapter 2.4, International Cultural Cooperation, Finland : Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends in Europe,

E-Doc Link: www.culturalpolicies.net

Introduction to the main actors and principle institutions working in the field of international cultural cooperation in Finland.