

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide an assessment of the situation concerning the application of and knowledge about the MU agreement¹ at state, regional and local level and to provide input for and proposals concerning a revision of the agreement.

The MU agreement is the name of the framework agreement for participation by and payments to artists for exhibitions that was signed by the state, the Swedish Artists' Organisation (KRO), the Swedish Craftsmen and Designers' Organisation (KIF), the Association of Swedish Professional Photographers (SFF) and the Association of Swedish Illustrators and Graphic Designers and was confirmed by the Government to enter into force in 2009. The purpose of the agreement is to create better conditions for visual and design artists to be paid for work done. It applies to state institutions and museums.

The agreement presupposes a reference group with representatives of the parties, of which the Swedish Arts Council is a member, tasked with monitoring the implementation and application of the provisions of the agreement. Based on the issues of which the reference group has become aware in the past three years, it can be concluded that there is a need to review possible strengths and weaknesses of the agreement.

The report contains the following parts:

- The background to the MU agreement. This also includes a brief presentation of previous agreements and the results of a selection of studies of the situation for artists.
- A presentation of the results of a questionnaire survey on the MU agreement. The results presented are grouped in four areas: knowledge of the agreement, application of the agreement, effects of the agreement and the function of the agreement.
- An analysis starting from the questionnaire results divided up into the same four areas as the questionnaire along with a section discussing the economic situation of arrangers of exhibitions.
- Proposals for further information measures, the revision of the MU agreement, the future role of the reference group and the future role of the state as a party to an agreement and a provider of funding.

In summary, the report concludes that there are areas of the MU agreement that can be improved and clarified to promote greater application of the agreement. In the light of the questionnaire responses it can also be concluded

that there is a need for further information measures about the MU agreement primarily to state and independent arrangers and to regional and municipal politicians and authorities. The questionnaire also shows that there is a need to reinforce resources on a broad front in order to enable arrangers to apply the agreement to a greater extent.

In autumn 2012 the Swedish Arts Council sent a questionnaire to 277 state, regional and local museums and institutions that exhibit visual art and design as well as to other arrangers in the area of visual and design art. The purpose was to gather information about and views on proposals as to how the MU agreement is applied and functions. Out of the arrangers polled, 157 replied to the questionnaire, giving a response rate of 56.7 per cent.

The survey shows that even though arrangers have good knowledge of the MU agreement in many cases, they feel that there is a need for more knowledge about the agreement and about the costs that application of the agreement entails for municipal and regional authorities in particular. There is also a need for more knowledge about the agreement among state and municipal arrangers and among arrangers in the independent cultural sector.

A total of 39 per cent of respondents replied that they apply the MU agreement. State arrangers apply the agreement to the largest extent followed by regional arrangers, associations and municipal, private and other arrangers. The questionnaire replies show that there are deviations from application of the MU agreement even among state arrangers, which are bound to apply the agreement, and also among regional and municipal arrangers with public ownership. Associations and private and other arrangers apply the MU agreement to a small extent, chiefly on account of their economic situation.

The MU agreement is estimated to work well for most of the respondents applying the agreement. However, the survey shows that for some exhibitors the agreement has a negative effect on their exhibition activities in one or more respects. Exhibition periods, the number of exhibitions and the distribution of resources are the areas that have chiefly been affected negatively by the MU agreement.

Several of the arrangers replying see participation and exhibition payments to artists as something that is outside their regular budget. Even arrangers that budget these costs in their regular budget give the lack of economic scope as the main reason why they do not apply the MU agreement even though many of them are publicly funded institutions. This shows that payments to artists are

not viewed as an equally natural outlay as other costs. The results also indicate that it has been difficult for some of the arrangers to apply the MU agreement absent increased resources, without this having led to a negative impact on their exhibition activities.

In the light of these results information measures about the MU agreement are proposed to the following groups:

- state and municipal arrangers
- municipal and regional politicians and authorities
- arrangers in the independent cultural sector.

It can also be concluded from the survey that there is a need to supplement the agreement with clear definitions of terms of importance for the agreement. The purpose and scope of the agreement, provisions about exhibition and participation payments and the part of the agreement relating to payment scales for exhibition payments can be identified as being in need of clarification or revision.

A clearer role for the reference group as an interpreter of the agreement is also viewed as important so as to

enable the reference group to issue interpretations in the event of a dispute between an originator and an arranger.

Greater application of the MU agreement is an important aspect in promoting the working condition of visual and design artists. The Swedish Arts Council stresses that payments to artists when their works are exhibited should be given priority by arrangers, Since the application of the MU agreement with the existing level of activities entails increased costs for arrangers, there is also judged to be a need for arrangers to have access to increased funds if an application of the agreement is not to have a negative impact on existing activities, thus potentially helping to hamper the development of the area of visual and design art. Without the reinforcement of funding it is also judged to be difficult in the present situation for more arrangers to achieve full application of the agreement.

1. MU agreement stands for Agreement of Payment for Participation and Exhibition