

PROMOTING CULTURE

The Swedish National Council for Cultural Affairs is responsible for implementing national cultural policy determined by the government and parliament. The Council was founded in 1974.

A NATIONAL CULTURAL POLICY

The Swedish national cultural policy rests on the goals and guidelines drawn up by the Parliament (Riksdagen) in 1996. In all essentials they are based on the Cultural Policy Decision of 1974. At that time the Parliament laid down an integrated structure for national measures in the cultural area. These include not only state measures but have also strongly influenced cultural activities in county councils and municipalities.

The area of cultural policy covers activities involving the written word, music, visual and theatrical arts, as well as the press, radio and television and film. It also includes certain measures concerning adult education and associations, as well as measures for the preservation and revitalisation of our cultural heritage.

The state, county councils and municipalities run cultural institutions, support the cultural activities of adult education associations, help independent theatre, dance and music groups as well as arrangers of cultural events, ensure that the cultural heritage is preserved and much more.

The state finances a large number of central cultural institutions, including the Royal Opera House, the Royal Dramatic Theatre and the state museums. The state also supports local and regional cultural activities through financial grants.

The state's responsibilities include the legislation in the field of culture. It is mainly the preservation of ancient monuments and film that are regulated by statutes and agreements. There has also been a Libraries Act since 1996.

The Parliament reaches its resolutions on the basis of government bills on cultural policy goals and guidelines, organisational principles for the state cultural bodies and on appropriations for cultural purposes. Within the Parliament the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Cultural Affairs prepares cultural and mass media issues.

The Government submits bills concerning the national budget for culture etc to the Parliament, issues ordinances on state cultural measures, determines, via letters of instruction, certain rules for cultural appropriations after the budget has been approved by the Parliament, appoints government commissions and decides on certain senior appointments.

Cultural matters are dealt with by the Ministry of Culture. The Council is then responsible for developing national cultural policy.

THE GOALS OF CULTURAL POLICY

In December 1996, the Parliament laid down new, national goals for cultural policy:

- to safeguard freedom of expression and create genuine opportunities for all to use that freedom,
- to work to create the opportunity for all to participate in cultural life and cultural experiences and to engage in creative activities of their own,
- to promote cultural diversity, artistic renewal and quality, thereby counteracting the negative effects of commercialism,
- to make it possible for culture to be a dynamic, challenging and independent force in society,
- to preserve and use the cultural heritage,
- to promote education,
- to promote international cultural exchange and meetings between different cultures within Sweden.

THE AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY OF THE
NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR CULTURAL AFFAIRS

Theatre, dance, music, literature, public libraries, arts' periodicals, museums, exhibitions and visual arts are the cultural areas that lie within the realm of the National Council for Cultural Affairs. One of its main tasks is to allocate government grants to institutions, organisations and groups in these areas.

ALLOCATING GRANTS

The Council allocates government grants to regional museums, county libraries, regional musical activities and to regional and local theatres, dance and music institutions. The Council also gives grants to:

- public libraries,
- audio recording,
- research and development,
- independent theatre, dance and music groups,
- international cultural exchange,
- culture in working life,
- culture in development areas,
- arts' periodicals,
- literature,
- county arts activities,
- projects at principal museums,
- development activities.

The grants aim to promote diversity and quality and to ensure that the national concern for culture is widespread. The Council sees culture for children and young people and access to living culture even outside the urban areas as particularly important.

PROVIDING DATA FOR DECISIONS

The National Council for Cultural Affairs watches over development in the cultural field and carries out studies and other tasks on behalf of the Government. One important task is to evaluate the Government's efforts and provide data on which to base government decisions concerning the cultural budget.

PROVIDING INFORMATION

Part of the Council's activities is to gather and disseminate information that promotes cultural development. The Council publishes a large amount of material. Reports, papers and statistics in cultural areas are published regularly. The Council also publishes two information periodicals, a newsletter for libraries and arranges seminars and conferences on various current topics.

OTHER ASSIGNMENTS

Statistics

The Council for Cultural Affairs carries out a considerable number of assignments in the field of statistics. Every year publications are issued, many with statistical data from various areas of art and regional culture. Since 1999 the Council has been carrying out a three-year assignment to prepare separate book statistics. From 2000 an extensive publication with general cultural statistics will also be available.

Research

The Council, through its sectoral responsibility, also has the task of supporting a long term build-up of knowledge in areas of research relevant to cultural policy. The Council co-operates with institutes of higher education, universities and other authorities and organisations in the research sector.

EU

Together with the National Heritage Board the Council forms Cultural Contact Point Sweden (Kulturkontakt Sverige), with particular responsibility for information concerning the EU's cultural programme.

CultureNet Sweden (Kulturnät Sverige)

CultureNet Sweden is located within the Council, with the task of facilitating communication of information in the cultural field with the help of IT. One of the important tasks of the editorial staff is to interest and inspire both the culturally interested public and cultural institutions and organisations to use IT and digitalise cultural material.

THE ORGANISATION OF THE

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR CULTURAL AFFAIRS

The National Council for Cultural Affairs has a board appointed by the Government and is run by a Director-General. In order to guarantee expert knowledge for allocation of grants the board has appointed qualified experts in their fields to its working and reference groups. The secretariat has about 60 employees.

SWEDISH NATIONAL COUNCIL
FOR CULTURAL AFFAIRS

Box 7843, 10398 Stockholm, Sweden

Visiting address: Långa raden 4, Skeppsholmen

Tel: +46-8-519 264 00, fax: +46-8-519 264 99

E-mail: statens.kulturrad@kur.se

Web-site: www.kur.se

© 2001 Statens kulturråd

Printed in Sweden by

Berlings Skogs, Trelleborg 2001

Marbled paper: © Kerstin Nilsson