

National report (November 2019) from The Artists' Association of Finland to the IAA Europe

In 2019 the Artists' Association of Finland has been pushing forward with its "**Strategic Goals For The Government Programme 2019–2023**".

The goals are defined in this document: https://artists.fi/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/STS_hallitusohjelmatavoitteet_web_ENG.pdf

...and listed here in a more compact way:

1. Increasing funding for visual art to parallel that in other art forms
2. Permanently raising funding for art and culture to a minimum of one percent of the government budget
3. Raising the level of working grants for artists and increasing their number
4. Increasing the number of artist pensions
5. Consolidating the system of exhibition payment
6. Strengthening the percent for art principle
7. Developing the spectrum of artists' livelihood
8. Developing the mediator level of visual art

We have had some success in our lobbying:

- The state has decided to raise the level of working grants for artist.
- The state is investing more in the "percent for art principle". (The principle refers to the idea that 1 % of the construction budget of all buildings should be allocated to public artworks in those buildings. The principle has been spreading in Finland and now, at our insistence, it has been broadened so that at least in theory any kind of artworks, not just sculpture, paintings and such, can be funded by this principle.)
- The state is taking the exhibition payment system seriously. Finland has for a long time had a copyright-based "Exhibition copyright fee" system, through which artists are paid compensation, when their works are exhibited in museums. (Typical fee is for example 60 € per painting at minimum.) Now we have been lobbying for "Exhibition payment" system, which would not replace the copyright-based system, but function in parallel to it and the two systems would complement each other. The state has tested the new system for 3 years now and is assessing the results. We are quite confident that after the official assessment the system will be — hopefully in good form — be made permanent and mandatory to all art museums in Finland.

We have also had disappointments. For example the new government did not allocate any new money for artists' pensions, even though all parties in the government admit that many elderly artists, especially in fine arts and literature, have severe income problems, because they have not been accumulate any pension on top of the state minimum — unlike practically all workers, entrepreneurs and self-employed people in other, non-artistic fields.

At the moment we are lobbying to ensure that the EU copyright directive is properly implemented in Finland. Our view is that it's [important that the EU copyright directive is fully implemented here with no local exceptions — with no weakening of the directive's guidelines and ethos](#). We also claim that it's important that the decisions on what is 'fair and adequate compensation' are made in negotiations, where the artists' voice is powerfully

present through artists' associations and copyright collecting societies. In these negotiations collecting bargaining should be preferred, so that artists best interest is safeguarded.

We are also working with a fairly new Finnish association called Globe Art Point (<http://www.globeartpoint.fi>) to improve the situation of immigrant artists or artists with immigrant background or artists whose native language is not Finnish or Swedish. We have learned that even though artists associations and the state systems in theory do not discriminate against these artists, in practice the non-native or newly-arrived international artists often find it hard to find the sufficient information about the art scene, the support systems, and to fit in. We try to improve the situation.

We have also been able to increase collaboration across all the arts. Forum Artis is the national co-operation organ for all the Finnish artists' associations, in all fields of art, from performing arts to visual arts, music, literature etc (<https://www.forumartis.fi/english-summary>). It has now raised its profile in the national debates, which has benefited the arts in general.

All in all, I think we — the Finnish artists — are doing fine, as one would expect from some new studies, like this: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/nov/08/on-top-of-the-world-europeans-say-they-are-happier-than-ever> The survey says that "Rich Finns were the most satisfied subgroup in the survey...", but for the Finnish artists the problem of course lies in the fact that many artists in Finland belong to the economically poorest part of the population — in spite of the artistic success and popularity that they might achieve.

Best r.

Dr. TEEMU MÄKI
Chairman of The Artists' Association of Finland
Helsinki, Finland
teemu.maki@artists.fi
<https://artists.fi/en/>