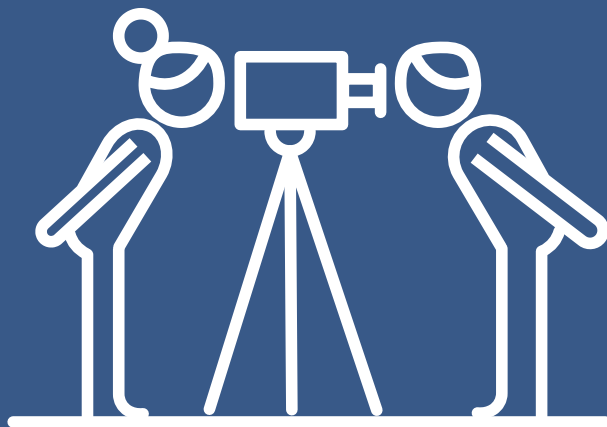




# Co-operation Programme for **Culture** 2025–2030

Together for a Creative, Sustainable and  
Visible Nordic Region



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This publication is also available online in a web-accessible version at:  
<https://pub.norden.org/politknord2024-737>

# Foreword



**Parisa Liljestrand, Swedish Minister for Culture and  
Karen Ellemann, Secretary General of the Nordic Council of  
Ministers**

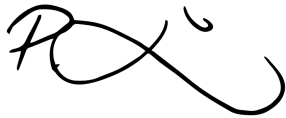
Co-operation between the Nordic Ministers of Culture to promote art, culture and media is a core area for the Nordic Council of Ministers. Here in the Nordic countries, we can strengthen our position through greater cultural co-operation across borders. As we face major internal and external societal and global changes, it is clear that a free and vibrant cultural life will play a crucial role in preserving our cohesion, sense of hope and quality of life.

The foundation for the Nordic Council of Minister's co-operation in the cultural arena lies in our shared history of cross-border exchange between cultural actors, organisations and institutions. The principle of keeping an arm's length distance between politics and culture provides guidance and underscores the importance of our trans-Nordic programmes, organisations and institutions. The Nordic support afforded to the cultural sector opens the door for network building, the exchange of experiences and common projects, among other things. Measures which emphasise transnational added value must be given priority.

The Co-operation Programme sets the course for Nordic co-operation on culture policy in the 2025–2030 period. As per the programme for 2021–2024, it describes the political goals and priorities that shall contribute towards boosting cultural resilience in the Nordic Region, thereby contributing to the realisation of the Nordic Council of Ministers' Vision 2030 for the Nordic Region to be the most sustainable and integrated region in the world.

Over the coming years, the Council of Ministers for Culture will place special focus on maintaining resilient and democratic societies. Efforts to promote an inclusive cultural life that is accessible to all will be prioritised, not least in order to support children and young people and their well-being. Events over the last few years have shown that two areas which require both discussion and common action are the continued protection of free, artistic expression and our preparedness when it comes to the protection of cultural heritage. Co-operation in previous programme periods on disinformation and the influence of tech giants on democratic discourse, as well as the role of culture and the media in the green transition, have yielded concrete results on which we can build further. Together, the Nordic countries can strengthen the role of culture internationally and build sustainable, resilient societies.

Culture and media actors in the Nordic Region, representatives from civil society and the research community, and the Nordic Council have all provided input on the challenges and areas of co-operation that fall under this programme. Nordic cultural institutions and strategic partners from within the cultural sector who receive financing from the Nordic Council of Ministers have also provided input as part of the process.



**Parisa Liljestrand**  
Swedish Minister for Culture



**Karen Ellemann**  
Secretary General of the Nordic Council  
of Ministers

# Introduction

The Co-operation Programme for Culture describes the political goals and priorities for 2025–2030 which shall contribute to greater cultural resilience in the Nordic Region.

The co-operation programme is the governing document for all activity undertaken by the Council of Ministers for Culture. The programme was approved by the Council of Ministers for Culture on 26 August 2024 and applies until 31 December 2030.

The co-operation programme shall contribute towards realising the Nordic Council of Ministers' vision for a Nordic Region which is the most sustainable and integrated region in the world by 2030. The entire Nordic Council of Ministers works to achieve this vision by way of the three strategic priorities.

Art and cultural freedom, a free and independent media and the arm's length principle together lay the foundation for free speech, knowledge sharing, democratic participation and dialogue. It is particularly important that these principles be protected at times when society is facing considerable challenges. Public trust and societal resilience can be strengthened through the continuation of Nordic cultural co-operation. Such co-operation supports democratic and open societies and brings the people of the Nordic Region together. The Nordic language community creates a sense of belonging and common Nordic identity. The preservation of cultural heritage boosts knowledge about history and fosters a sense of community in the present.

Nordic cohesion and integration must be built through solid Nordic cultural and media policy co-operation. Ever since the signing of the Helsinki Treaty in 1962, cultural co-operation has been a core focus area for the Nordic Council of Ministers. The Helsinki Treaty stipulates that Nordic co-operation must support and reinforce cultural development and promote exchange within the fields of literature, art, music, theatre, film and other cultural areas, and that it must ensure opportunities for co-operation within radio and television.<sup>[1]</sup> Taking this baseline as its starting point, Nordic cultural co-operation shall aim to strengthen and promote exchange between cultural and media actors across the Nordic Region, stimulate growth within the cultural and creative industries, and contribute towards greater mobility and dialogue.

The Council's cultural institutions and cultural support programmes provide a supporting structure for Nordic culture policy co-operation and have an important role to play in relation to Our Vision 2030. The institutions' activities and the support programmes' grants reach far and wide across Nordic, Nordic-Baltic and international cultural spheres.

Beyond preserving and developing cultural heritage, good cultural experiences also help to build community, boost quality of life and create wellbeing, and so they are of value

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1. The Nordic Council of Ministers and the Nordic Council, 1996, *the Helsinki Treaty*, Article 13.

to everyone who lives in the Nordic Region, especially children and young people. Culture should be made relevant and meaningful to all by placing greater focus on diversity, inclusion and participation.

The language and culture, as well as the cultural and linguistic rights of indigenous people and national minorities, must occupy their rightful place within Nordic cultural co-operation. The Sámi peoples and other national minorities naturally operate across national borders in the Nordic Region. This cross-border co-operation is of considerable value to the Nordic community.

Cultural policy development must be relevant and based on knowledge, and it must build upon research-based investigations and statistics.

[The Council of Ministers' policy on the integration of sustainable development, gender equality and a children-and-young-people's rights perspective](#) is an important starting framework for the development of Nordic culture and media policy initiatives.

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# Our Vision 2030



## A **competitive** Nordic Region

Together, we will promote green growth in the Nordic Region based on knowledge, innovation, mobility, and digital integration.



## A **green** Nordic Region

Together, we will promote a green transition of our societies and work towards carbon neutrality and a sustainable, circular, and bio-based economy.

**The Nordic Region will become the most sustainable and integrated region in the world**



## A **socially sustainable** Nordic Region

Together, we will promote an inclusive, equal, and interconnected region with shared values and strengthened cultural exchanges and welfare.

All activities in the Nordic Council of Ministers will contribute to fulfilling our vision that the Nordic Region will be the world's most sustainable and integrated region in 2030.

The co-operation programme describes how the sector will work with the three strategic priority areas.

## Political Priorities



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Competitive, visible and creative cultural co-operation shall help to strengthen the opportunities of Nordic cultural actors both within and outside of the Nordic Region, help boost development and innovation, and provide Nordic art and cultural producers with better visibility within international arenas.

Art and culture have an inalienable intrinsic value and so conditions that foster art and culture must be reinforced and made available to all in our society. In the time since the previous cultural policy co-operation programme was adopted in 2020, many things have changed both in the Nordic Region and globally. The new Nordic Co-operation Programme for the Council of Ministers for Culture shall assist in addressing common challenges and in generating synergies by way of cross-sector initiatives.

The Nordic Region occupies a leading position within the cultural and creative industries at the global level. However, the status report for Our Vision 2030 shows that the import of cultural products from other Nordic countries is in



decline.<sup>[2]</sup> Nordic co-operation on culture will attempt to address this challenge through greater mobility and the international branding of Nordic art and culture. Competitive, visible and creative cultural co-operation shall help to strengthen the opportunities of Nordic cultural actors both within and outside of the Nordic Region, help boost development and innovation, and provide Nordic art and cultural producers with better visibility within international arenas. Co-operation with art and culture actors in neighbouring regions such as the Baltic, the Arctic and Ukraine shall also help facilitate the exchange of skills and network building.

In an age where the playing field for culture and media actors is undergoing change as a result of digital developments, the influence of tech giants and artificial intelligence (AI), it is important that the Nordic Region take a common approach to the challenges and opportunities herein. These challenges have been remarked on in the recommendations from the Nordic think-tank on the influence of tech giants on democratic discourse and by others.<sup>[3]</sup> Co-operation relating to the tech sector shall help build perceptions of the Nordic Region as a unified, tech-democratic region.

The starting point for cultural co-operation in the Nordic Region is that everyone should have equal opportunities to participate. Research shows that participation in cultural life is affected by gender, socio-economic conditions, level of education and geographical location. This also applies when it comes to cultural participation by children and young people.<sup>[4]</sup> An equal arts and culture sector, which is free from discrimination and accessible to all, can help bolster integration in the Nordic Region.

Cultural life in the Nordic Region was greatly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The ability of artists and cultural actors to create, practise and disseminate art and culture was greatly impacted.<sup>[5]</sup> Among other things, studies show that news media revenues decreased at the same time as public interest in the news was rising.<sup>[6]</sup> Changes in cultural and media habits can also be seen in the context of the general turbulence we see today. A strong and robust level of culture and media co-operation may therefore help to equip the Nordic Region better in time of crisis and change.

The Nordic Council of Ministers for Culture has adopted goals and sub-goals for the 2025–2030 period. The political priorities direct all activity within the area of cultural policy within Nordic co-operation. The sector shall develop initiatives and activities in line with the goals.

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2. Nordic Council of Ministers, 2023, "[NORDEN – en bæredygtig og integreret region?](#)"
  3. Nordic Council of Ministers, 2023, [En nordisk tilgang til den demokratiske debat i tech-giganternes tidsalder: Recommendations from the Nordic Think-Tank for Tech and Democracy](#)
  4. Kulturanalys Norden, 2023, [Delaktighed i kulturlivet i Norden](#)
  5. Kulturanalys Norden, 2023, [Kultursektoren efter covid-19-pandemin](#)
  6. Nordicom, 2021, [Covid-19 och de nordiska nyhetsmedierna](#)

## Goal 1: Art and cultural actors in the Nordic Region must have suitable conditions to pursue environmentally friendly forms of artistic and cultural production, dissemination and distribution



### A Green Nordic Region

Art, culture and knowledge of cultural heritage provide different perspectives and help us understand how we can manage climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution, both on land and at sea. Art and culture have a role to play in the transition towards more sustainable lifestyles. Nordic initiatives within the cultural arena must contribute towards removing barriers to the green transition and they must facilitate the exchange of experiences and new models for more future-focused and climate-neutral practices in the production, dissemination and distribution of art and culture.<sup>[7]</sup> The cultural and creative industries play an important role in this. Cultural co-operation must place focus on vulnerable cultural heritage in line with international conventions.

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7. [The Nordic Green Roadmap for Cultural Institutions](#) is an example of a trans-Nordic initiative for a green transition of the cultural sector.

**Sub-goal 1.1: Art and cultural actors in the Nordic Region must increase their knowledge and competencies in regards to how art and cultural life affect and are affected by climate change.**

**Sub-goal 1.2: Art and its role in communicating and imparting new perspectives on climate change and the green transition must be supported and given more visibility, in line with the terms that prevail in the art and cultural sphere.**

**Sub-goal 1.3: Co-operation must be established on the green conservation, use and dissemination of cultural heritage that is vulnerable to climate change.**

## Goal 2: The Nordic Region shall be a visible, competitive and creative region



### A competitive Nordic Region

A visible and creative Nordic Region will be able to provide better jobs and living conditions, as well as stronger networks and skills development, for Nordic artists and cultural actors. Co-operation with actors in the Arctic and Baltic regions on cross-border mobility must be given central priority and contribute towards promoting the Nordic Region as a forerunner when it comes to freedom of expression and culture. The cultural and creative industries must contribute towards greater competitiveness and value generation. Nordic cultural co-operation shall, in a sustainable manner, support innovation in the development of new partnerships and business models, in addition to climate-friendly production and the dissemination and marketing of art and culture outside of the Nordic Region.

**Sub-goal 2.1: The communication and dissemination of art and culture within and beyond the Nordic Region must be strengthened.**

**Sub-goal 2.2: Mobility and exchange between Nordic artists and cultural actors, and actors in the Arctic, the Baltic and other neighbouring areas, must be increased.**

**Sub-goal 2.3: Joint cultural initiatives outside of the Nordic Region must be implemented and help contribute towards both the international branding of Nordic cultural actors and the visualisation of the Nordic Region as a creative centre.**

## Goal 3: The cultural and linguistic diversity of the Nordic Region must be strengthened and contribute to greater cohesion, trust and integration in the Nordic Region



### A competitive Nordic Region

Co-operation around culture and language generates a sense of community, understanding and trust between peoples in the Nordic Region, and it contributes towards a stronger degree of integration in the region. Knowledge of and access to Nordic culture, cultural heritage and Nordic languages, including sign languages, among children and young people builds cohesion and wellbeing, and provides opportunities for creative development, culture of expression and democratic participation. Cultural co-operation must support culture as a general social good and a strong and diverse cultural life as something that is inclusive and available to all. Language policy co-operation must be continued and prioritised, with emphasis placed on the preservation of minority languages in the Nordic Region, the development of language technologies and the development of language and cultural comprehension among children and young people. The Declaration on Nordic Language Policy must be followed up on in collaboration with the Council of Ministers for Education and Research.

**Sub-goal 3.1: A solid and predictable framework for cultural co-operation in the Nordic Region must be secured.**

**Sub-goal 3.2: Participation in a cultural life in the Nordic Region that promotes inclusion, diversity and equality must be increased.**

**Sub-goal 3.3: The interests and use of culture and language among children and young people in the Nordic Region must be bolstered.**

## Goal 4: The role of the cultural sector and the media in preparing society for crises and digitisation and new technologies must be promoted



### A socially sustainable Nordic Region

Access to culture and cultural heritage bolsters the development, resilience and reconstruction of civil society in times of crisis and war. A free and independent media, freedom of expression and artistic freedom all help to equip the region better in times of crisis and threat. Importance must be attached to greater Nordic co-operation and concrete initiatives to counteract disinformation. In an age characterised by major societal challenges and technological development, Nordic initiatives must contribute towards better, more effective and targeted solutions in collaboration with relevant sectors.



**Sub-goal 4.1: Nordic co-operation and the exchange of experience within preparedness and the cultural sector must be established.**

**Sub-goal 4.2: Freedom of expression and artistic freedom in the Nordic Region must be promoted via greater focus on the free and independent role of the cultural sector and the media.**

**Sub-goal 4.3: Nordic co-operation on culture and media policy challenges resulting from new technologies, artificial intelligence (AI) and the influence of tech giants on democratic discourse, including their influence on the welfare and wellbeing of children and young people, must be strengthened.**

# Follow-up and Evaluation of the Co-operation Programme

The co-operation programme applies for the 2025–2030 period but is divided into two three-year work plans for 2025–2027 and 2028–2030 respectively.

An evaluation will be conducted after the first three-year period. The Council of Ministers can then use this evaluation as a basis for adapting the co-operation programmes and to determine how the work plan for the last period should be formulated.

# About this publication

## Nordic Co-operation Programme for Culture 2025–2030

PolitikNord 2024:737

ISBN 978-92-893-7947-2 (PDF)

ISBN 978-92-893-7948-9 (ONLINE)

<http://dx.doi.org/10.6027/politiknord2024-737>

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Frontpage icon: Knud Andersen

Political Priorities: *Finnish National Opera and Ballet with Tero Saarinen*. Photo: Mikki Kunttu/Visit Finland,

Goal 1: *House To Watch The Sunset (2015)* by Swiss artist Not Vital. Photo: Kim Hansen/Louisiana Museum of Modern Art

Goal 2: *Helsinki Biennale 2021*. Photo: Mariia Kauppi/Visit Finland

Goal 3: *Room for Children*. Photo: Ann-Sofi Rosenkvist/imagebank.sweden.se

Goal 4: *Street art i København*, Photo: Ida-Lina Strang

Published: October 2024



**The Nordic Council of Ministers**

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