

Sweden

In 2006, Sweden ratified the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, as one of the first 30 countries to do so. No significant changes in legislation were deemed necessary in connection with the ratification.

The basis of Swedish cultural policy, formulated in the national cultural policy objectives approved by the Riksdag, corresponds, on the whole, with the objectives and purpose of the Convention. They therefore form a starting point for Sweden's work to protect and promote the diversity of cultural expression in its territory and at international level.

The Government's cultural policy is mainly implemented by government agencies in the area through general formulations and specific tasks. In the instructions from the Government to all government agencies in the area of culture it is, for example, written that they are to integrate a gender equality, diversity and children's perspective in their activities, as well as international and intercultural exchange and cooperation.

The national cultural policy objectives should also guide cultural policy regionally and locally. In 2011, Sweden introduced a new model for distributing state funding to regional cultural activities. The aim, in line with the cultural policy objectives, is to bring culture closer to citizens by creating the conditions for regional priorities and variation.

International cooperation is also promoted via special initiatives such as IASPIS (an international programme of the Swedish Arts Grants Committee supporting international exchange for practitioners in the areas of visual art, design, craft and architecture) and Partner Driven Cooperation in the Field of Culture, a programme to strengthen cooperation in the area of culture between Sweden and Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, China, India, and Indonesia with the aim of contributing to poverty reduction and fair and sustainable development. Culture also has a central role in Swedish assistance to democracy and freedom of expression, which is a Swedish priority in development cooperation. The work to increase the number of places of refuge in Sweden for persecuted authors is an example of this.

A large proportion of cultural life in Sweden is based on the efforts of civil society and the importance of civil society's collaboration with the institutions is particularly emphasised in the cultural policy. On the whole, dialogue with civil society is an integral part of the efforts to promote democracy.

Due to the short period of time that has passed since the entry into force of the Convention and since the Convention's guidelines were eventually adopted, it is still difficult to completely assess the effects of these initiatives.

The level of general knowledge about the Convention is assessed to be limited. There are therefore challenges in increasing knowledge and competence with regard to the actual use of the content and implementation of the Convention. The work to implement the Convention must therefore be seen in a long-term perspective.

In summary, it may be stated that the fact that the Convention is now up-and-running provides good prospects for increased awareness and understanding of the issues of international and intercultural exchange and cooperation and of the role of culture in society.