

KULTA ry – a Central Organization for Finnish Culture and Arts Associations

Parliamentary elections 2023 – Election Manifesto of KULTA ry

Culture is common capital – increase the culture budget to one percent!

Culture guarantees growth and sustainability and is one of the conditions of our existence. A vibrant and strong culture supports mental strength, well-being, and resilience in times of crisis. In many ways, culture produces more than that which is provided by state funding.

The cultural budget of the Ministry of Education and Culture is a necessary core funding for the sector. A long-term and stable funding base is a prerequisite for effective operations. The aim of increasing funding to a percentage of the state budget has been widely accepted, which – in regard to the 2022 budget – would mean an increase of EUR 122.2 million.

In order for the creative sectors to become a driving force of Finland's growth, every child must have the right to enjoy culture, art and cultural heritage, as a creator and experiencer, and Finns must have equal opportunities to participate in cultural life. Culture creates growth – both economic and mentally.

1. Creative sectors drive Finnish growth

The creative sectors have a significant impact on the economy and employment, in addition to their cultural values. They support regional development, the vitality of regions and diversify the economic structure. The supply of culture and art also strengthens the service sectors. The growth of the creative sectors supports Finland's sustainable growth program and the goal of carbon-neutrality, as the growth is based on intangible added value.

What should happen next?

We propose that the share of creative industries in Finland's GDP be increased to a pan-European level and that the international competitiveness of the creative sectors be strengthened. The creation of new creative actors should be promoted. Cooperation between businesses and arts and culture actors should be supported to increase the added value of both. Cultural tourism should be developed. Culture, as part of country image work, should be utilised in order to identify Finland as an innovative and interesting country. The diverse ecosystem of the creative sectors should be strengthened, whereupon the intrinsic value and commercial value of art are mutually reinforcing. The operations of Creative Business Finland should be consolidated, and its services further developed to meet the needs of the internationalization of the art and culture sectors. Organisations focusing on cultural exports and international co-operation should be strengthened and intangible added value created by strengthening creative know-how in various fields.

2. Children have a right to enjoy culture as creators and experiencers

Children and young people must have the right to be creative and to make and experience art – regardless of their place of residence or wealth. A child's right to enjoy art, culture and heritage depends on the actions of adults. High-quality children's culture leaves a mark that carries on for the rest of their lives. Art teaching and education develops creative and critical thinking and promotes craftsmanship, which is a prerequisite for building and understanding the solutions of a new kind of society.

What should happen next?

Equal and accessible cultural services for children and young people must be ensured. The mental resilience of children and young people should be strengthened through culture. Our aim is that every child and young person living in Finland is covered by a cultural education plan. By bringing the joy of culture into early childhood education, primary school, secondary education and youth work, the mental health of young people is strengthened, and pressures are eased. As part of the Finnish model of children's activities, every child should be able to find a pleasant cultural activity in connection with their school day. Reading and literacy should be promoted in collaboration with different fields. There should be an opportunity to advance on the path of professionalism throughout the entire country – and young people graduating in the field should have the opportunity to advance in their careers. Basic art education should be strengthened as part of the education system.

3. Everyone has an equal right to enjoy culture and art

Equal opportunities in culture increase inclusion and reduce inequality. Cultural participation strengthens mental resilience and the well-being of the mind – everyone should have a right to it. Culture helps each and every one of us to understand ourselves and others. Cultural participation promotes well-being and health, combats social polarisation, and strengthens democracy. Culture increases the perceived satisfaction in one's own life. Everyone should have the opportunity to address their own identity through culture. Increasing equality supports the line of sustainable development. Cultural participation alleviates loneliness and increases community spirit.

What should happen next?

Increasing opportunities for cultural activities, the removing of barriers to cultural participation and, thus, reducing disparities in cultural participation between different population groups. A rich and diverse cultural offer for all kinds of people should be ensured. Regional access to culture and the arts in co-operation with municipalities, welfare regions and provinces should be strengthened. A distinctive culture also helps to keep sparsely populated areas alive. Cultural services should take the diversity of languages and cultures into account. People with disabilities must also be guaranteed the right to enjoy culture. Encounters and dialogue in society through culture should be increased. This means that culture should be part of all key government programs to improve people's quality of life, such as the age program, the loneliness strategy, and the democracy program. Culture should be introduced into integration services.