

## Final decision regarding the Nordic cultural co-operation

**On October 26, 2005 the Nordic Cultural Ministers will hand down a conclusive decision concerning how the new structure for the Nordic Cultural Co-operation will be structured.**

The Nordic Cultural Ministers made a decision in principle on June 15, 2005 that nine of the twenty-one institutions within the Nordic Cultural Co-operation are to be terminated. This means that the existing artistic committees and institutions NIFCA, NordScen, NOMUS and NORDBOK will be discontinued and replaced by a project-oriented co-operation where the Cultural Ministers and departments will define thematic, temporally constrained, programs. The Programs' content will in future be determined by ad hoc groups consisting of artistic specialists.

A number of artists' organizations and other important contributors from the Nordic region have repeatedly criticized the design of the proposed new structure. Their main criticism is that thematically restricted programs establish political control of cultural life, which abandons the principle of arm's length. The organizations fear that artistic expertise will be lost in the process.

However, in June 15th's decision in principle concerning restructuring, the Nordic Cultural Ministers decided that cultural co-operation will be administrated in accordance with the Principle of Arm's length and that the artistic committees and institutions' primary functions will be implemented into the new structure.

The Principle of Arm's Length requires that politicians support art and culture without interfering with theme or content, an idea that until this point in time has appeared to be a respected aspect of Nordic cultural politics. The Principle of Arms' Length is the political tool that guarantees artistic autonomy and the freedom of expression for artists. In contrast, a thematically-oriented cultural function such as has been suggested may threaten freedom and autonomy in art.

NIFCA's board is looking forward to the opportunities that sections of the decision in principle provide to the Cultural Ministers when making their final decision. However, we would like to point out the importance of preserving and utilizing the Principle of Arm's Length, artistic expertise and dialogue between actors in the artistic field in the Nordic Region on all levels of the cultural co-operation.

Yours sincerely,

NIFCA's Board  
October 5, 2005

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See NIFCA's homepage, [www.nifca.org](http://www.nifca.org), for links to the central documents from the restructuring process, including the Nordic institutions' proposal for a new structure, a summary of NIFCA's present main functions.