



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry of Culture

Speech by Minister for Culture Amanda Lind at UNESCO's online Meeting with Ministers of Culture

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delivery.

Good afternoon,

My name is Amanda Lind and I am Minister for Culture and Democracy in Sweden.

First of all, I would like to thank UNESCO for this follow-up on the Forum of Ministers of Culture in November last year.

In these very challenging times of the coronavirus pandemic, we all recognise the importance of art and culture when crisis strikes.

We also acknowledge the vulnerability of the cultural sphere as a whole and, consequently, the threats posed to the status of artists, especially for women.

It is more important than ever to join efforts to strengthen the protection and promotion of open and democratic societies, where artists and creators can work under free, fair and safe conditions, and where artistic freedom is protected and promoted.

In response to the current crisis, the Swedish Government has allocated 50 million Euros to both small and large non-governmental cultural actors. Public cultural institutions will be supported by an early distribution of the yearly grants.

In Sweden, as in many other countries, the majority of cultural actors are self-employed. They will be able to benefit from the general crisis measures

for small enterprises which include loan guarantees, temporary reduction of social security contributions and rental reductions.

As the Swedish Minister of Culture and Democracy, I am worried by the implications on human rights and democratic freedoms of some of the measures taken during the crisis. Many states are now enforcing measures that, to different extents, limit human rights.

Regrettably, measures could have consequences for the right to freedom of expression, for media freedom and for the democracy.

We must ensure that all emergency measures are in accordance with international human rights law. Any restrictions to the enjoyment of human rights must be limited to what is prescribed by law, necessary, non-discriminatory and proportionate to the evaluated risk.

The values of, and the access to, cultural heritage – the tangible as well as the intangible – must not be lost, but rather continue to be a unifying force for society. This applies during the crisis, as well as when businesses, museums and institutions have reopened, and non-governmental organisations are able to meet again.

The crisis gives us new opportunities to further develop and discover digital arenas of the cultural heritage all over the world.

Overall, the steps taken so far to support the cultural and creative sectors are important, but we also need to explore new measures. When the acute crisis has passed, we must ensure that the cultural and creative sectors come alive again. We know that these sectors are crucial for our societies, for social cohesion, innovation and creativity. Therefore, we have to join forces to maintain the role of culture now and in the future to come.

Thank You.



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Speech from Ministry of Culture

Speech by Minister for Culture Amanda Lind at the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award (ALMA)

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delivery.

Dear friends,

We live in times that are uncertain and in many ways scary. How can we explain to our children what is happening, when we barely understand it ourselves? When measures to protect people risk increasing the distances between us, how can children and young adults find hope – for today and for the future?

Astrid Lindgren was not afraid of showing children the not-so-sunny aspects of life. She trusted the children – and the grown-ups around them – to find ways to cope with complexity and worries. Sometimes with a sense of humor, sometimes more seriously and profoundly, such as in *The Brothers Lionheart*, where there are great sorrows, but also great hope.

You may know that Pippi Longstocking was invented by Astrid Lindgren when she was asked by her daughter, sick in pneumonia, to tell her a story about a girl bearing that name. A way to escape the worries, or perhaps just the boredom. But Pippi turned out to be so much more. She has been – and continues to be – a role model for girls and boys around the whole world. She shows that being strong and independent does not exclude being human and vulnerable.

In these times, where the importance of empathy between us is clearer than ever, reading is a way of reducing distances and crossing borders.

Many children today have to stay at home, not knowing when they're allowed to go out and see their friends again. But literature can be a way to explore this world from home – or even find new worlds, that can give comfort, or simply something else to think about. This is specially important in times like these.

The power of literature makes it evident why reading promotion is one of my most important priorities as the Swedish Minister for Culture, and why the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award is so important.

Founded by the Swedish Government in 2002, it is the largest international children's and young adult literature award in the world. And now, you are about to find out who will be the 2020 laureate.

Therefore, I would now like to hand over the word to jury, and for all of you watching – take care, wherever you are, and thank you all for your invaluable work to help children and young adults find new worlds as well as hope in this one!



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Speech from Ministry of Culture

Speech by Amanda Lind at the 2019 Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award ceremony

Published 28 May 2019

Stockholm, 27 May 2019. Check against delivery.

Your Royal Highness, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, Bart Moeyaert,

“I feel sorry for all the children who don’t live in Noisy Village”. These are the words of Anna, one of the inhabitants of Astrid Lindgren’s famous Noisy Village – Bullerbyn. I think that, compared to many other places one could have grown up in, Noisy Village is not really that noisy. Rather, it symbolises harmony and simplicity in many minds.

I don’t think that any of us had a childhood that exactly matches what was depicted in Astrid Lindgren’s books about Noisy Village. And there are children who can barely recognise themselves in this idyllic and peaceful village. Children, with their vivid imagination, have no problems to imagine themselves in another context – on a pirate ship, in a magic forest or – why not? – living in Noisy Village.

But sometimes, you might actually need to be able to recognise yourself. You might need a book to show you that you’re not alone. You’re not the only one growing up in a family that doesn’t look like a classical fairy-tale family. It is not just you who is witnessing fights over how the rent for next month should be paid. You’re not alone having to comfort your own mother, when she doesn’t want to get up in the morning.

There are as many childhoods as there are people who have ever lived. Actually, if we include all daydreams, all fears and all wishful thinking, there are even more childhoods.

Bart Moeyaert, you have showed us so many different childhoods. They are intriguing, sometimes strange, but sometimes also strangely familiar. Some of us can relate to parts of some of them, others can relate to other parts. Just like Astrid Lindgren, you see the child – or the young adult – in all its facets. You see the inner and the outer contradictions, conflicts and also the reconciliation. The same way you help the young reader to see him- or herself, you help us grown-ups to see the different realities of the next generation.

The realities that you let us see are a lot of things – they are violent, passionate, boring, funny, embarrassing and generous. But they are not black and white. Growing up is not always easy, but the sympathy and solidarity we see between friends, between brother and sister, or between the writer and his characters, make it easier to face the different worlds out there.

The children who don't live in Noisy Village don't need our pity – they need our respect and attention, our empathy and imagination. And we all need writers like Bart Moeyaert. Therefore, I am very happy to warmly congratulate you, on behalf of the Swedish Government, on the award of the world's most distinguished prize for children's and young adult literature. Thank you Bart, for showing us all the noisy villages, towns, families and friends – and all the noisy childhoods – that could be out there.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry of Culture

Speech by Amanda Lind at the Sami Culture Policy Summit

Published 07 March 2019

Umeå, 6 March 2019. Check against delivery.

Dear friends,

Here, in the very centre of Umeå, in front of the town hall, it is a great honour for me to have the possibility to share this historic event with you! Humbled by the fact that I get to participate in the inauguration of the Sami Culture Policy Summit, I would like to start by warmly thanking Sáhkie Umeå Sami Association, Giron Sami Theatre and all those having generously supported this event.

I would also like to congratulate the Umeå Sami week on the occasion of its twentieth anniversary! Twenty years of highlighting Sami arts and culture and their contributions to the cultural life of the region.

Dear friends,

Some months ago, Linnéa Axelsson's epic *Ædnan* was awarded the prestigious August Prize. Many readers, with or without Sami background, have had the possibility to follow Ristin, Ber-Joná, Lise and Sandra in their fight for survival, recognition and dignity.

The political context of the destinies depicted in *Ædnan* is not very flattering to the Swedish state. But these stories need to be heard. They help to rewrite Swedish-Sami history – and future. And to be clear on this – if, and when the Sami Parliament so wishes, the Swedish Government intends to appoint a Truth and Reconciliation Committee.

During the last couple of years, many new important stories have met a wide audience. Through literature, drama, visual arts, film and music, the

historical and contemporary conditions, injustices, victories and traumas are made visible to a larger audience.

The beautiful and political works of the artist Britta Marakatt-Labba have provoked new thoughts in many minds, both in and far beyond Sápmi.

The film Sami Blood by Amanda Kernell has won several international awards as well as the Audience Award of the Swedish Guldbagge Film Awards. With over 180 000 cinema tickets sold in Sweden, the film widely exceeded all expectations. But it was obvious that the strong account of the chances and choices in life of Elle Marja have the power to go straight to the hearts of any audience.

Dear friends,

It is the main objective of Swedish Sami policy to promote a vivid Sami culture and a strong and diverse Sami cultural life. One must not make the mistake of believing that indigenous culture is only about preservation and tradition. Tradition is important. But to be firmly rooted in tradition is not in contradiction with contemporary artistic expressions. With musicians such as Maxida Mäarak or Sofia Jannok, artists from Sápmi meet a wide and also young audience.

The famous Sami singer Mari Boine once said the following, as conveyed by Veli-Pekka Lehtola in his book “The Sami People – Traditions in Transition”: “My self-image was full of wounds and aches, and making songs was medicine for those. Only when people who heard the songs came and asked, ‘how do you manage to tell so exactly about me and my feelings?’ did I understand the songs were like medicine for others too. The next step was that I wanted to make others understand us and our pain: those who had looked down on us and had diminished and wounded us. The third step was to notice how great were the riches and traditions contained in our culture.”

But individual artists cannot carry culture alone. Culture is something collective and individual at the same time. Transmitting culture and language in meetings between people and across generations is fundamental. But for the future of Sami culture in Sweden, also strong institutions are of great value.

The cultural centre Gaaltije in Östersund is vital in promoting and strengthening South Sami culture.

Sámi Duodji gives important contributions to Sami handicraft and design.

Giron Sámi Teáhter raises important and difficult questions to a wide and diverse audience.

Ájtte, Swedish Mountain and Sami Museum in Jokkmokk, shows how Sami cultural heritage is also Swedish cultural heritage. The importance the Government ascribes to Ájtte is shown by the increased grants the Museum since 2018 receives from the state cultural budget.

Also, the Sámi associations provide many cultural meeting places, such as Tráhppie, here in Umeå.

Dear friends,

I am very happy that Sáhkie, with Giron Sami Theatre and partners, have provided the conditions for discussions on the future of Sami cultural life and what can be done by the Government. I know that there are high expectations on how the state level can increase its commitments. I look forward to an open and honest discussion on the challenges and possibilities for strengthening Sami culture.

In 2018, the Government raised the grants to Sami culture distributed by the Sami Parliament. But I fully understand that there is much more that can be done. Sweden is a party to the UNESCO 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

Sweden's constitution was also amended in 2011 to affirm the obligation of public power in Sweden to promote the opportunities of the Sami people to preserve and develop a cultural and social life of their own. These are obligations to be taken seriously. The Swedish Government will continue the efforts to reach a Law on Consultation in Matters Concerning the Sami People. We also continue to work for a realisation of a Nordic Sami Convention, that will strengthen the rights of the Sami people to maintain and develop their language, culture, economic activities and social life.

Dear friends,

As many of you already know, 2019 is the International Year for Indigenous Languages. In the official communication around this year, it is clearly stated that without the indigenous languages on this planet, the world would be a poorer place. So many stories would be lost forever. So much knowledge and so many perspectives would disappear. One cannot help but to think of Elsa

Laula's words that it is about life or death.

I know that all around Sápmi, there are heroic efforts made to strengthen the Sami languages. Initiatives by the public sector, by organisations, civil society and committed citizens together make up a forceful contribution. The work by the Sami writer's organisation Bágo is vital in promoting the written word. But it is a matter of both production and distribution. The Sami Library in Jokkmokk has an important role to play in ensuring access to the Sami works already written. But it is obvious that more still needs to be done to even start to make up for the wounds made. The loss of a language is a loss for us all.

We are happy that the Swedish Sami Parliament is a partner to the International Year for Indigenous Languages and the Government intends to join in the efforts to highlight this initiative.

The Government sees the need for a coherent and long-term strategy on how to strengthen the Sami languages. We have also given the task to the Sami Parliament to make an inquiry into how a Sami language centre can be developed to strengthen more Sami varieties.

The Sami Parliaments in Norway, Sweden and Finland cooperate on a project that aims to establish a common Sami language centre, called Sámi Giellagáldu. The Nordic civil service body for Sami issues, in which the Sami parliaments also are represented, has established a working group to look into the organisational model for Sámi Giellagáldu. Since Sápmi stretches across four states, international cooperation is very important. We must do all we can to ensure that there are no border obstacles for Sami cooperation and cultural exchange.

During the Swedish Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers in 2018, we arranged, together with the Swedish Sami Parliament, the Institute for Language and Folklore and the Swedish Arts Council, a workshop on how culture can be used for language revitalisation. One good example that was presented was by Giron Sámi Teáhter, based in Kiruna. They use the playful cooperation methods of circus to inspire children to dare to use Sami languages.

This great example of using the arts for language revitalisation was also presented to the Nordic ministers for culture in October last year. Inspired by this, The Nordic Council of Ministers will shortly launch an initiative of promoting culture and education for language revitalisation. I will closely

follow this initiative and I hope that you will too.

Dear friends,

Being here in Umeå with you, the city's year as European Capital of Culture in 2014 comes to mind. During this year, Sami culture was at the very core of the activities. The structure of the year was based on the eight seasons in Sami tradition. This was a great possibility to discuss what the place of Sami culture, both here and in the greater area, could be. I know there were many heated debates on this and the lessons learned can guide us in the future.

I genuinely welcome that these discussions are now continuing. I look forward to an exchange with Sami cultural actors and others on how the Government in cooperation with the regions, municipalities, civil society and others can work together to help strengthen the Sami cultural infrastructure. And I wish you all the best for a fruitful, honest and inspiring summit.

Dear friends,

I warmly welcome that this is an event focusing on culture. But having the responsibility also for sports, I would like to wrap up by shortly bringing your attention to the Vasaloppet ski race that was held in Dalarna three days ago. On that very day, the third of March, ninety years ago, the Sami athlete Johan Abram Persson won Vasaloppet. Most newspapers did not bother to put his name in the headlines, they only focused on his ethnicity. But there are names, there are faces, there are individuals with their own stories. And with the growing amount of Sami artistic work, these names, faces and stories will be read, seen and heard.

Thank you very much for letting me be a part of your summit, which I hereby declare inaugurated!



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry of Culture

Speech by Amanda Lind at the opening of Göteborg Film Festival

Published 28 January 2019

Gothenburg, 25 January 2019 Check against delivery.

Film-lovers,

My name is Amanda Lind and this is my first speech since being appointed Minister for Culture and Democracy last Monday. Thank you for the invitation – I'm very happy to be here in Gothenburg and celebrate filmmakers and the art of film.

Culture must be free and have the ability to bring about change in an open and democratic society. Politics must be a facilitator for culture throughout our country.

As Minister for Culture and Democracy, I will continue the work of my predecessor to ensure access to culture for more people everywhere in Sweden, in the country side, in small towns and in our larger cities.

I will build on the foundation laid for our film policy during the last electoral period. The financial conditions and social security for our authors, dancers, actors and other artists must be improved. At the same time, I want to work to ensure better conditions for producing films in Sweden. The tax incentives for film production, that were subject of an inquiry last year, is one interesting proposal to strengthen film in Sweden.

Also, the work that started with the #metoo-movement and #silenceaction needs to continue. There's much more to be done in terms of gender equality. It must be a given, just like in the rest of society, that people can work in the film industry without being subjected to sexual harassment or worse. Equality creates creativity. And creativity is the foundation of a thriving culture.

Once again, it is a great honour for me to follow my predecessors' tradition of opening the Gothenburg Film Festival. I hope you find this year's films intriguing, inspiring and challenging.

I hereby declare the 2019 Gothenburg Film Festival open.

Thank you.