

To: Ministry of Education and the National Pedagogical Institute, Czech Republic

Statement in support of Art Education in the Czech Republic

As President of the International Society of Education through Art (InSEA) and on behalf of the Society, I write to express deep concern about the proposed changes to the curriculum for basic education, under discussion by the Ministry of Education in the Czech Republic. The Czech Republic has an enviable reputation for art education and I firmly support the stance of our colleagues of the Czech section of the Society.

My objection (indeed rejection) of the proposed changes is based on the following grounds:

The proposals fail to take into account contemporary international research and trends in education through art (UNESCO; UN - SDG 4; InSEA) – that call for access to a broad and comprehensive education. When I talk about art education, I mean **visual arts** education. It is referred to in many ways in different countries; art and design; visual arts; arts, craft and design for example.

Our manifesto, based on our almost 70 year history, sets out clearly the benefits of education through art; access our manifesto [here](#). To take just one quote from the manifesto:

“All learners, regardless of age, nationality or background, should have entitlement and access to visual art education”. Surely the stage of basic education is **THE crucial place** to nurture this in line with the UN’s SDGs? We have members in more than 80 countries with unparalleled expertise in research in art education and this is our united stand for the subject.

The proposals ignore numerous calls for a greater presence of art and visual education that, for example, UNESCO has highlighted. Particularly concerning is that the number of hours may be reduced for our subject or be at the discretion of individual school principals or head teachers – in the worst-case scenario art education may no longer be compulsory. If this is true, it is totally unacceptable. Head teachers and teachers in basic education need robust and clear guidelines, without which, most who are not art specialists lack the knowledge and confidence to make such decisions. The result would be an impoverished educational experience for a nation’s young people, with far reaching consequences for the creative industries – so vital in the 21st century.

Turning to our Manifesto again, "Visual art education should be systematic and be provided over a number of years, as it is a developmental process. Learners should engage with 'making' alongside learning about art." This is only achievable in basic school education, **if there is statutory provision for art education and clear guidelines teachers and school principals.**

I have been privileged to spend most of my professional career working in two countries that enjoy a very high reputation internationally for education; Finland and Scotland. It is no coincidence that, in both countries, art education is compulsory at the equivalent of your basic education level. At a time when the world’s most successful economies are increasingly dependent on skills of visual communication, problem solving and creativity, please don’t deny your country’s young people that essential foundation in life.

Your sincerely

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President, International Society for Education through Art