STARKE SCHULTERN · FLOURISH – ARTISTS & INDUSTRIES

Old-age poverty in figures

What performing artists earn and what is left for them in old age.

AS OF NOVEMBER 2026

INCOME

What performing artists earn

Around 32,000 performing artists are insured with the Künstlersozialkasse, the German artists' social insurance fund, men and women in roughly equal numbers. Each year the members report to the fund the income they expect.

€22,733
Average annual income, all

€26,821
Men

€18,674
Women

Age	All	Men	Women
under 30	€20,816	€22,734	€18,967
30 to 40	€20,736	€25,455	€16,579
40 to 50	€24,798	€30,217	€19,696
50 to 60	€24,746	€29,006	€20,351
over 60	€20,342	€22,493	€17,802
total	**€22,733**	**€26,821**	**€18,674**

Average annual income of actively insured members in the performing arts, as of 1 January 2026. Overall, women earn around 30 per cent less than men, and around a third less between the ages of 30 and 50.

PENSION

What is left in old age

The statutory pension depends on how much someone earns relative to the average of all insured people. Each year earns pension points. One year on the average income of the performing arts earns 0.44 points, less than half of an average earner.

Income	per year	after 40 years	after 45 years
All, €22,733	€18.61	€744	€837
Men, €26,821	€21.95	€878	€988
Women, €18,674	€15.29	€611	€688

Monthly statutory pension, gross, at today's values. Each contribution year adds the amount in the column "per year".

For comparison: 45 years at exactly the average earnings of all insured people result in the so-called standard pension of €1,913.40 gross per month. A female performing artist on the average income of women in her field reaches around €688 after 45 years.

How it is calculated: annual income divided by the provisional average earnings for 2026 of €51,944, multiplied by the current pension value of €42.52 from 1 July 2026, multiplied by the number of years. The calculation is simplified. It assumes that income stays the same in relative terms and does not include deductions for health and long-term care insurance, child-raising periods or other entitlements.

What we do about it

Flourish wants to protect artists from poverty in old age by opening up a new economic space for them. Starke Schultern is the Flourish division for performing artists aged 50 and over.

Preferred placement: Flourish gives priority to artists aged 50 and over when making suggestions to companies.

Support with training: Anyone who works with people in companies through Flourish needs a coaching, mentoring or supervision qualification. Flourish supports them along the way.

Exchange: In the Starke Schultern WhatsApp group, members help each other.

Get involved

Create a profile: www.flourish-artists-industries.de
Information and WhatsApp group: www.starkeschulterneu.com

Sources

Künstlersozialkasse, KSK in Zahlen, average income and number of actively insured members, as of 1 January 2026, kuenstlersozialkasse.de. Provisional average earnings 2026: German Social Insurance Calculation Values Ordinance 2026. Current pension value and standard pension from 1 July 2026: pension adjustment 2026. Künstlersozialkasse incomes are based on the members' own estimates.

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