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National courts and other non-judicial bodies

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Finland



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National courts

District Courts handle criminal, civil and petitionary matters. A decision by a court of first instance can usually be submitted for the consideration of a higher court. A decision by a District Court can be appealed to the Court of Appeal. A decision by the Court of Appeal can, in turn, be appealed to the Supreme Court if the Supreme Court grants leave to appeal.

Administrative Courts handle appeals concerning decisions by authorities. A decision by an Administrative Court is appealed to the Supreme Administrative Court.

Special courts include the Market Court, the Labour Court, the Insurance Court and the High Court of Impeachment.

The contact information of the courts can be found [in Finnish](#) and [in English](#).

National Human Rights Institutions

In 2012, a functionally autonomous and independent centre for human rights was established under the auspices of the Office of the Parliamentary Ombudsman. The role of the Centre for Human Rights is to distribute information and promote education, training, research and cooperation in the field of fundamental and human rights. The Centre will prepare reports on the implementation of fundamental and human rights as well as take initiatives and issue statements to promote these rights. The Centre for Human Rights will also participate in international efforts to promote fundamental and human rights. The Centre for Human Rights does not deal with complaints or other individual cases which fall under the remit of the highest legal supervisory body.

Ombudsman

The Parliamentary Ombudsman

The Parliamentary Ombudsman can be contacted if it is suspected that authorities or officials have not complied with the law or fulfilled their obligations. For example, it is illegal to violate fundamental rights. Anyone can complain to the Ombudsman. The complaint may relate to a matter concerning the complainant, but it is also

possible to complain on behalf of another person or jointly with others. The Ombudsman investigates the complaint if there are reasons to believe that an authority has acted illegally. Complaints are investigated free of charge. As part of the investigation, the Ombudsman hears the person or the authority targeted by the complaint. In addition, he requests reports and statements from various authorities and can, if necessary, order inspectors from his office to conduct investigations. Complaints are investigated free of charge.

Of the various measures available to the Ombudsman, the most severe is a criminal prosecution of malfeasance. As an alternative to this, the Ombudsman can issue an official reprimand to the official concerned. In most cases, he expresses his view as to how the procedure followed has been illegal or involved negligence and issues a reminder about correct procedure. The Ombudsman can also make a proposal for remedying the error, and draw the attention of the Council of State to shortcomings that he has observed in legal provisions or regulations.

The Office of the Parliamentary Ombudsman

Street address: Arkadiankatu 3, Helsinki Postal address: 00102 Parliament Website: <https://www.oikeusasiamies.fi/en/web/guest> E-mail: oikeusasiamies@eduskunta.fi Telephone: +358 9 4321 Fax: +358 9 432 2268

The Chancellor of Justice

The Chancellor of Justice can be contacted in a matter that directly concerns the complainant or in any other matter, should the complainant believe that authorities, officials or other persons or bodies performing public functions have acted incorrectly or neglected their obligations, or that a member of the Bar has neglected his or her obligations. In addition, anyone who believes that a fundamental right or human right guaranteed under the Constitution has not been observed can contact the Chancellor of Justice. Legally trained personnel process the complaints and obtain any necessary supplementary documentation. The complainant is usually provided with an opportunity to file a reply to the respondent. The complainant will then receive a written decision by mail. The services of the Office of the Chancellor of Justice are free of charge to the complainant.

If it is found that a procedure was illegal or incorrect, the Chancellor of Justice can issue a reprimand to the official or instructions on the proper procedure for future reference. In more serious cases, he can order charges to be brought against the official. If he deems it necessary, the Chancellor of Justice has the power to propose that provisions or instructions be amended, a court ruling be annulled or some other extraordinary appeal be made. An investigation carried out by the Chancellor of Justice may in itself result in the authority or official correcting their own error.

The Office of the Chancellor of Justice

Street address: Snellmaninkatu 1, HELSINKI Postal address: P O Box 20, FIN-00023 Government Website: <https://www.okv.fi/en/> E-mail: kirjaamo@okv.fi Telephone: +358 295 162 902 Fax: +358 9 1602 3975 Contact: tiedotus@okv.fi

Specialised Human Rights Bodies

The Ombudsman for Children

The following duties of the Ombudsman for Children are laid down by law:

- Monitoring the welfare of children and young people and the implementation of their rights
- Influencing decision-makers from a child's perspective
- Maintaining contacts with children and young people and conveying information received from them to decision-makers
- Conveying information concerning children to professionals working with children, authorities and the public
- Developing cooperation between those responsible for child policy
- Promoting the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Office of the Ombudsman for Children

Address: Vapaudenkatu 58 A, 40100 Jyväskylä Website: <http://www.lapsiasia.fi/en/> E-mail: lapsiasiavaltuutettu@oikeus.fi Telephone: +358 295 666 850 Fax: +358 14 337 4248

Equality Body

The Ombudsman for Equality

The Ombudsman for Equality is responsible for: supervising compliance with the Act on Equality between Women and Men and the prohibition of discrimination and discriminatory job advertising, in particular; promoting the objective of the Act by means of initiatives, advice and guidelines; providing information about the Equality Act and its application; and monitoring the implementation of equality between women and men in different sectors of society. In addition, the Ombudsman for Equality supervises the implementation of the protection of gender minorities against discrimination.

The Office of the Ombudsman for Equality

Postal address: P O Box 22, FIN-00023 Government Street address: Hämeentie 3, Helsinki Website: <https://www.tasa-arvo.fi/web/EN/> E-mail: tasa-arvo@oikeus.fi Telephone: +358 295 666 840 Telephone help line: +358 295 666 842 (Mon - Thu 9 - 11 and 13 - 15, Fri 9 - 11) Fax: +358 9 1607 4582

Non-Discrimination Ombudsman (Yhdenvertaisuusvaltuutettu)

The Ombudsman for Equality promotes equality and tackles discrimination. The Ombudsman is an independent authority.

The Non-Discrimination Ombudsman may be contacted if a person has experienced or observed discrimination on grounds of age, origin, nationality, language, religion, beliefs, opinions, political activities, trade union activities, family relationships, health, disability, sexual orientation, or other reasons related to the person. The Ombudsman's tasks also include promoting the conditions, rights and status of groups that are at risk of discrimination, such as foreigners. In addition, the Ombudsman oversees the expulsion of foreign nationals and acts as the National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings.

In practice, the work of the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman involves, for example, advising, the investigation of individual cases, promoting reconciliation, training, data collection, influencing legislation and authorities' practices, and legal assistance. The tasks and rights of the Ombudsman are enshrined in the [Non-Discrimination Act](#) and the [Act on the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman](#).

Discrimination on grounds of gender or gender identity is dealt with by the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman.

Office of the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman

Postal address: P O Box 24, FIN-00023 Government Street address: Ratapihantie 9, Helsinki Website: <https://www.syrjinta.fi/web/EN/> E-mail: yvv@oikeus.fi Telephone: +358 295 666 800 Customer service: +358 295 666 817 (on weekdays from 10-12, with exceptions during the summer months) Fax: +358 295 666 829 Contact: +358 295 666 813 or +358 295 666 806

Data Protection Body

Data Protection Ombudsman

- monitors compliance with data protection legislation and other laws regarding the processing of personal data
- raises awareness of the risks, rules, safeguards, obligations and rights involved in processing personal data
- carries out investigations and inspections
- imposes administrative penalties for breaching the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- issues opinions on legislative and administrative reforms concerning the protection of individuals' rights and freedoms with regard to the processing of personal data

- issues opinions on offenses relating to the processing of personal data
- oversees the processing of credit data and corporate credit data
- handles requests for the issuing of provisions regarding the rights of data subjects and notifications of other concerns regarding personal data processing
- receives notifications from data protection officers
- receives notifications of personal data breaches
- establishes a list of when data protection impact assessments are required
- assesses ex-ante consultations on the processing of high-risk data
- adopts codes of conduct and standard contractual clauses
- encourages the introduction of certification, the accreditation of a certification body and deals with the withdrawal of issued certificates
- cooperates with other EU data protection authorities on a one-stop-shop basis
- takes part in the activities and decision-making of the European Data Protection Board and refers matters to the European Data Protection Board where appropriate

The Office of the Data Protection Ombudsman

Postal address: PO Box 800, 00531 Helsinki Street address: Lintulahdenkuja 4, 00530 Helsinki Website: <https://tietosuoja.fi/en/home> E-mail: tietosuoja@om.fi Telephone: +358 2956 66700 Telephone help line: +358 2956 66777 (Monday to Wednesday 9-11, with exceptions in summer)

Other

Legal aid

The purpose of legal aid is to give individuals the possibility to obtain professional legal assistance fully or partly at the expense of the state. Legal aid covers all legal matters. However, legal aid is usually not granted if the applicant has legal expenses insurance that covers the expenses of the case in question. In criminal proceedings, the defendant is under certain circumstances entitled to a public defender paid for by the state, regardless of his or her financial status. The victim of serious violent crime or sexual crime can be provided with a trial counsel at the expense of the state, regardless of his or her income. Legal aid is not available to companies or corporations. In matters pending abroad, legal aid covers the costs of legal advice.

In court proceedings, legal aid is offered by Public Legal Aid Attorneys, Advocates and other lawyers; in other matters, legal aid is provided by Public Legal Aid Attorneys, who work in State Legal Aid Offices. These Offices are normally located in the same municipalities as the District Courts. The contact information of the State Legal Aid Offices can be found [here](#).

Refugee Advice Centre

The Refugee Advice Centre is an NGO that provides legal aid and advice to asylum seekers, refugees and other foreigners in Finland. The Centre also works to promote the position of asylum seekers, refugees and other immigrants in Finland and follows the asylum and refugee policy of the European Union.

Address: Pasilanraito 9 B, 00240 Helsinki Website: <https://www.pakolaisneuvonta.fi/en/legal-services/> E-mail: pan@pakolaisneuvonta.fi Telephone: +358 9 2313 9300 Fax: +358 9 2313 9310

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