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Finnish

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National justice systems

Finland

This section provides you with an overview of the judicial system in Finland.

The judiciary – the court system

Broadly speaking, the Finnish judicial system consists of:

- independent courts of law; general courts, administrative courts and special courts
- the prosecuting authorities
- the enforcement authorities (which see to the enforcement of judgments)
- the prison service (which implements custodial sentences)
- public legal aid, lawyers and licensed legal counsels.

The judiciary may also refer solely to the courts.

Article 98 of the Finnish Constitution lists the various courts of law. General courts comprise the Supreme Court, the courts of appeal and the district courts. General administrative courts comprise the Supreme Administrative Court and the local administrative courts.

Supreme judicial authority in civil and criminal matters is exercised by [the Supreme Court](#) and, in administrative matters, by [the Supreme Administrative Court](#). The two supreme courts also supervise the application of the law within their own purview. In Finland there are also special courts, which are provided for in separate statutes.

The independent and autonomous position of judges is safeguarded by a provision of the Constitution stating that a judge may be removed from office only by a court decision. Judges cannot be transferred to another post without their consent, unless the transfer is part of a reorganisation of the court system.

Section 21 of the Constitution states that everyone has the right to have his or her case dealt with appropriately and without undue delay by a legally competent court of law or other authority. According to Section 21(2) the public nature of proceedings and the right to be heard, to receive a reasoned decision and to appeal against a decision are safeguarded by law, as are other guarantees of fair judicial proceedings and sound governance. This Section also lays down requirements for the quality of judicial proceedings.

Judicial administration

Many of the duties and responsibilities related to the administration of justice and the development of court activities fall primarily within the competence of the Ministry of Justice.

Additional information

[The website of Finnish courts](#) contains information on the judicial system of Finland. It is a one-stop portal providing information about courts, prosecutors, enforcement authorities and legal aid.

It includes, for example, the latest case law from the courts of appeal and the administrative courts.

The free [Finlex database](#) includes case law from the courts, the Electronic Statutes of Finland and translations of Finnish acts and decrees.

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