How to bring a case to court

Finland

1 Do I have to go to court or is there another alternative?

Sometimes an alternative procedure may be a better option. See 'Mediation in Member States' and 'Mediation in Member States - Finland'.

2 Is there any time limit to bring a court action?

Different time limits apply to different kinds of actions. For more information about time limits, you can talk to a lawyer or a Legal Aid Office (*oikeusaputoimisto*).

3 Should I go to a court in this Member State?

See 'Jurisdiction'.

4 If yes, which particular court should I go to in this Member State, given where I live and where the other party lives, or other aspects of my case?

See 'Jurisdiction – Finland'.

5 Which particular court should I go to in this Member State, given the nature of my case and the amount at stake?

See 'Jurisdiction – Finland'.

6 Can I bring a court action by myself or do I have to go via an intermediary, such as a lawyer?

Private individuals can bring any civil action to court without using legal counsel. In complicated cases it may be to your advantage to use a lawyer.

7 To initiate the case, who exactly do I apply to: to the reception office or the office of the clerk of the court or any other administration?

Court registries act as first points of contact.

8 In which language can I make my application? Can I do it orally or does it have to be in writing? Can I send my application by fax or by e-mail?

Proceedings in Finnish courts are conducted in Finnish or Swedish. Claims (applications for a summons) must be made in writing and usually in Finnish. In the Åland Islands, Swedish must be used. Nationals of Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Denmark can use their own language if necessary. Claims can be submitted by fax or e-mail. Automatic processing is also available for certain kinds of proceedings. See 'Automatic processing – Finland'.

9 Are there special forms for bringing actions, or, if not, how must I present my case? Are there elements that have to be included in the file?

There are no special forms available. Your claim must clearly state what it is you are seeking and the grounds on which you are seeking it. As a rule, you should attach to your claim any contracts, undertakings or other written evidence you intend to rely on.

10 Will I have to pay court charges? If so, when? Will I have to pay a lawyer right from the introduction of my application?

Once a case is over, the court will charge a handling fee. The amount of the fee depends on the stage in the proceedings at which the matter was resolved. Some cases can be resolved on the basis of written evidence alone. However, most cases are only decided after a hearing. For more information, visit:
https://oikeus.fi/tuomioistuimet/karajaoikeudet/en/index/charges/chargescollectedbycourts.html
Lawyers' fees and when they are payable are matters of contract, and there are no specific rules.

11 Can I claim legal aid?

Eligibility for legal aid depends on your level of income. Legal aid is not granted towards petty actions. For more information, visit:
https://oikeus.fi/oikeusapu/en/index.html.

12 From which moment is my action officially considered to have been brought? Will the authorities give me some feedback on whether or not my case has been properly presented?

The date on which proceedings start is the date on which the court receives your application for a summons. The court can send confirmation of receipt upon request. The court cannot provide confirmation of whether or not a case has been properly presented.

13 Will I have detailed information about the timing of subsequent events (such as the time allowed for me to enter an appearance)?

The court will keep the interested parties informed of the progress of the case and provide an approximate timeline for subsequent events. You can also contact the court to enquire about the progress of your case.

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