

<b>Official name in original language</b>	Tuomioistuinvirasto / Domstolsverket
<b>Official name in English</b>	National Courts Administration
<b>Address</b>	<p>Visiting address: Silkkitehtaantie 5 C, Vantaa</p> <p>Postal address: PO Box 100, FI-00085 National Courts Administration</p>
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<b>Brief history</b>	<p>The purpose of the establishment of the National Courts Administration of Finland was to strengthen the independence of the judiciary.</p> <p>National Courts Administration was established on 1 January 2020 to ensure a favourable operating environment for the courts and to develop, plan and support the activities of the courts. Most of the tasks of the National Courts Administration have previously been handled by the Ministry of Justice.</p>
<b>Constitutional or legal status/basis</b>	The National Courts Administration is an independent central agency. It falls within the administrative branch of the Ministry of Justice.
<b>Legal acts regulating the Status</b>	Tuomioistuinlaki (22.2.2019/209) 19 a luku (Courts Act (22.2.2019/209) Chapter 19a)
<b>Composition:</b>	<p><b>The Board of Directors</b> exercises the highest decision-making power in the National Courts Administration.</p> <p>The National Courts Administration is headed by a <b>Director-General</b>. The Director-General decides on matters that are not to be decided by the Board of Directors or some other public official under the law or the rules of procedure of the National Courts Administration.</p> <p>The National Courts Administration consists of <b>three departments</b> - the administrative department, the finance department and the development department.</p>

In addition, the **head of communications** and the **director** in charge of court support and social relations work under the Director-General.

The National Courts Administration employs 45 people.

Total number of members

The Board of Directors has eight members.

Term of office

The members of the Board of Directors are appointed for five years at a time.

Is there a possibility to be renewed as a member?

Courts Act, Chapter 19 stipulates on the Board of Directors and its composition (section 7) as well as on their nomination (section 8).

The law does not restrict the re-election of Board member when his/her term is coming to an end. However, there is only one procedure for selection, regardless of whether you already have served as a member of the Board or not.

Do the members have a full-time position or not?

The members of the Board of Directors do not have a full-time position at the National Courts Administration.

Make up

Six of the members of the Board of Directors must be judges; from the Supreme Court, the Supreme Administrative Court, a court of appeal, a district court, an administrative court and a special court. The Board also has one member representing the non-judicial personnel of the courts and one member with special expertise in the management of public administration. Each member has a personal deputy.

Is there a majority of Judges?

Yes, six out of eight members.

**Presidency**

The Board of Directors chooses a Chairman and two vice-chairmen amongst themselves.

Currently the Chairman is Asko Välimaa, Justice of the Supreme Court. The vice-chairmen are Irma Telivuo, Justice of the Supreme Administrative Court, and Asko Nurmi, Senior Judge of the Court of Appeal, Turku Court of Appeal.

**Main Competences:**

The National Courts Administration is responsible for ensuring that the courts are able to maintain a high level of quality in the exercise of their judicial powers and that the administration of the courts is organised in an efficient and appropriate manner.

The National Courts Administration shall especially:  
1) make proposals to the Ministry of Justice on appropriations for the operating expenditure of the courts and decide on the allocation of the appropriations to the courts in accordance with the approved Budget, in so far as the appropriations have not directly been allocated to a specific court;

- 2) be in charge of the premises management of the courts, in so far as the power of decision in this regard does not lie with the Ministry of Justice;
- 3) be in charge of the maintenance and development of the information systems of the courts;
- 4) be responsible for organising training to judges and other court personnel in cooperation with the Judicial Training Board referred to in chapter 21;
- 5) [enters into force 1.1.2021] decide on matters related to the establishment, termination and transfer of public positions and internal recruitment arrangements at the courts, and deal with matters related to the employment relationships of court personnel in so far as these matters do not fall within the competence of a court or some other authority;
- 6) support the courts in their communication activities;
- 7) monitor the performance of the courts and conduct studies and assessments concerning this;
- 8) act as the agency representing the court system in national development projects and other projects, unless this task falls within the competence of a specific court, the government or some other authority;
- 9) participate in the overall development of the operation of the court system;
- 10) promote, support and coordinate development projects concerning courts and their activities;
- 11) submit initiatives to the government on legislation, measures and development in its field of activity;
- 12) participate in the international cooperation in its field of activity;
- 13) be in charge of the technical and routine central administration of the court system;
- 14) make proposals to the Ministry of Justice on appropriations for the operating expenditure of the Judicial Appointments Board and the Judicial Training Board, decide on the allocation of the appropriations to the Boards, and perform the other central administration tasks concerning the Boards.

From 1.1.2021 onwards the National Courts Administration will decide on matters related to the establishment, termination and transfer of public positions and internal recruitment arrangements at the courts, and deal with matters related to the employment relationships of court personnel in so far as these matters do not fall within the competence of a court or some other authority. It is worthwhile to emphasise here that this power relates to the positions, such as how many judges post there are in each court, not to the holders of these positions.

Career of  
judges  
and / or  
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As to the appointment of judges, the National Courts Administration is involved in the initial preparatory work for appointment of judges. It receives the applications for judges' positions and can request supplements from the candidates when necessary. It drafts a summary of each applicants merits as well as a table format document containing merits of all the applicants. The involvement of the National Court Administration ends when it sends the applications and the summaries it has compiled to the court in which the position is open. Further processing of the applications, after the court(s) has given its statement, falls under the mandate of the Judicial Appointments Board. (The Judicial Appointments Board is an independent state organ which is co-located with the National Courts Administration, and just as the courts, under the same accounting unit as the National Courts Administration.)

## Judicial training

The National Courts Administration, in cooperation with the Judicial Training Board, is responsible for organising training to judges and other court personnel. The development department of the National Courts Administration has a team dedicated to training.

The National Courts Administration is not involved in the disciplinary activities of the judges.

Disciplinary measures fall under the competence of the Chief Judge of his/her Court, or in case of a Chief Judge, the Chief Justice of the higher instance court (Chapter 15 of the Courts Act) or Chancellor of Justice and the Parliamentary Ombudsman.

The Chief Judge may give an admonition (warning).

## Discipline

The Parliamentary Ombudsman and the Chancellor of Justice have competence to investigate complaints made against judges. These procedures are not within the Judiciary itself. The decisions by the Ombudsman and the Chancellor of Justice may include a reprimand or an opinion e.g. concerning what constitutes proper observance of law. If a decision made by the Ombudsman or the Chancellor of Justice contains an imputation of criminal guilt, the party having been issued with a reprimand has the right to have the decision concerning criminal guilt heard by a court of law (section 10 subsection 3 of the Parliamentary Ombudsman Act and section 6 subsection 4 of the Chancellor of Justice Act). In serious cases the Ombudsman and the Chancellor of Justice have the right to order a pre-trial investigation to be carried out. They have also the right to bring charges against a judge for unlawful conduct in office (according to section 110 subsection 1 of the Constitution of Finland they have – as the only prosecutors – right to bring such charges).

(More can be read here:

<https://www.okv.fi/en/chancellor/duties-and-activities/supervision-courts-law/>  
and

[https://www.oikeusiamies.fi/en\\_GB/web/guest/the-work-of-the-ombudsman](https://www.oikeusiamies.fi/en_GB/web/guest/the-work-of-the-ombudsman) )

## Ethics

The “Ethical principles for judges” were (jointly) adopted by the Finnish Association of Judges and the Association of Supreme Court Justices. They are also published (in Finnish, Swedish and English) by the Finnish Association of Judges in 2012: ([https://asiakas.kotisivukone.com/files/tuomariliitto.kotisivukone.com/tiedostot/tuomarin\\_eettiset\\_periaatteet.pdf](https://asiakas.kotisivukone.com/files/tuomariliitto.kotisivukone.com/tiedostot/tuomarin_eettiset_periaatteet.pdf) “

The Ministry of Justice, which at that time handled most of the tasks now falling under the mandate of the National Courts Administration, was not involved in drafting of these principles. It was a deliberate decision not to involve the Ministry so as to underline the independence of the judiciary.

## Opinions on legislation / other opinions

The National Courts Administration has the right to submit initiatives to the government on legislation, measures and development in its field of activity.

From the purpose of the National Courts Administration - to “ensure a favourable operating environment for the courts and to develop, plan and support the activities of the courts” it can be inferred that the National Courts Administration has the power to make non-binding recommendations and guidelines for the courts.

**Status of decisions**

Just as any public employer in Finland the National Courts Administration can make binding decisions related to its own staff.

**Review**

The decisions on staff are appealable in the administrative procedure.

**Budget**

For 2020 the estimate budget of the National Courts Administration is 4,5 million euros. The finance department of the National Courts Administration is responsible for the preparation of the budget procedure and the financial planning.

