

30 June 2023

2023 REPORT ON THE APPLICATION OF THE EU CHARTER OF FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS: EFFECTIVE LEGAL PROTECTION AS A PRECONDITION FOR THE FULL APPLICATION OF FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

CONSULTATION OF EU MEMBER STATES: FINLAND

In addition to the information provided below, please see the information regarding Finland available at [European e-Justice Portal](#).

1. Which judicial and non-judicial remedies are available in your Member State:

a. In criminal, civil and administrative cases;

Civil cases:

The district court makes enforceable decisions in civil cases. A person who is dissatisfied with the decision may appeal against it to a court of appeal in accordance with the appeal instructions appended to the decision.

Under the Tort Liability Act, a person who deliberately or negligently causes injury or damage to another shall be liable for damages. Damages are awarded based on the principle of full compensation, which compensates for the entire loss suffered. Compensation must not, however, lead to overcompensation so that the person who suffered injury or damage is in a better position after compensation than before the incident. Finland also does not have punitive damages. If the liability is based on a violation of a European law or a human right, the adequacy of the amount of compensation must also be assessed from the point of view of whether it leads to adequate compensation for the violation in question. The provisions of the Tort Liability Act may therefore be overridden in these situations.

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There are no explicit provisions in the Finnish law on compensation for damage caused by an infringement of European Union law. However, the Supreme Court of Finland has held that the State can be held liable for damage caused by a breach of European Union law even in the absence of an express provision. The grounds for compensation are set out in the case law of the European Court of Justice. Liability for damages thus arises directly from a State's breach of Union law (see. e.g. the Supreme Court of Finland precedents KKO 2013:58, KKO 2016:28 and KKO 2017:84). Assessment of the damages to be compensated, limitation period and, for example, interest are determined by national law to the extent that it does not conflict with the effective legal remedy required the TEU article 19(1) (see. e.g. the Supreme Court of Finland precedent KKO 2013:58).

There are also no general legal provisions on compensation for violations of fundamental rights as expressed in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. There are, however, a number of laws that allow compensation for certain violations of fundamental rights and international human rights. For example, discrimination are compensated under the Act on Equality between Women and Men and the Non-discrimination Act. Infringements of the right to a fair trial within a reasonable time are compensated under the Act on Compensation for the Excessive Length of Judicial Proceedings. Human rights violations of accused and suspected persons can also be compensated under the Act on Compensation from State Funds for the Arrest or Detention of an Innocent Person.

In addition to the acts mentioned above, violations of fundamental rights expressed in the European Charter of Fundamental Rights can also be compensated without an explicit legal provision. There are numerous cases in the case-law of the Supreme Court of Finland where the Supreme Court has held that a violation of human rights can in itself be a ground for liability (see e.g. the Supreme Court of Finland precedents (KKO 2008:10, KKO 2011:38, KKO 2012:81, KKO 2013:52, KKO 2014:57, KKO 2014:58, KKO 2016:57, KKO 2016:20 and KKO 2016:71). It is of course worth pointing out that in the cases mentioned, the basis of responsibility has been the European Convention on Human Rights and the Constitution of Finland, not the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. This is unlikely to make much difference, given that the rights involved are very similar, if not identical. Compensation for a human rights violation may also be available if the Parliamentary Ombudsman has found that a human rights violation has occurred and recommended compensation.

Mediation is an alternative to a trial and the procedure is based on the parties' right to self-determination. Civil and application matters may be settled in public courts, most commonly in the district court. Mediation may also be conducted out-of-court and the settlement may, upon application, be confirmed as enforceable in the district court. Mediation provided by the Finnish Bar Association and other corresponding procedures constitute out-of-court mediation. An agreement made in out-of-court mediation cannot, as a rule, be confirmed by the district court if the matter concerns child custody, right of access or child maintenance.

Criminal cases:

Please see the brochure which provides information for crime victims on matters which they have the right to be informed about by the authorities: https://oikeus.fi/material/collections/20210208160649/7Ny7zWJGz/Rights_of_a_Crime_Victim.pdf.

Regarding compensation to crime victims, please see <https://www.valtiokonttori.fi/en/service/compensation-to-crime-victims/#general-about-the-compensation-to-crime-victims>.

Administrative cases:

In administrative cases appeal and administrative review before appeal are available. Public servants are also subject to liability for acts in office. If public servants neglect their official duties or acts in violation of them, they may be considered criminally liable. In addition to an authority, individual public servants are also liable for the damages that have resulted from their errors or negligence.

It is also possible to complain about the activities of an authority to the Regional State Administrative Agency. Regional State Administrative Agencies are the competent enforcement authority for health care and social services, schools and early childhood education, emergency services, alcohol sales on and off premises, occupational safety and health, web accessibility, environmental health and multiple areas of commercial regulation. For more information, please see <https://avi.fi/en/about-us/what-we-do/we-enforce>.

b. in cases of discrimination;

The work of the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman involves counselling, investigating individual cases, promoting conciliation between the parties, providing training, gathering information, as well as influencing legislation and the practices of the authorities. The Ombudsman can also bring an individual case concerning discrimination to the National Non-Discrimination and Equality Tribunal or a court of law to be resolved. The Ombudsman cooperates often with stakeholders and does advocacy work to promote equality and respond to and prevent discrimination. The Non-Discrimination Ombudsman's mandate covers also discrimination in working life.

The National Non-Discrimination and Equality Tribunal is an impartial and independent judicial body appointed by the Government. The Tribunal supervises compliance with the Non-Discrimination Act and the Act on Equality between Women and Men (Equality Act) both in private activities and in public administrative and commercial activities. The function of the Tribunal is to give legal protection to those who consider they have been discriminated against or victimised.

The Ombudsman for Equality (<https://tasa-arvo.fi/en/duties-of-the-ombudsman>) monitors the Equality Act and provides guidance and information on discrimination due to gender, gender identity and gender expression, and promotion of equality. In addition, the Ombudsman shall, by means of initiatives, advice and guidance, promote the accomplishment of the objectives of the Equality Act and provide information on equality legislation and its application in practice. Upon observation of non-compliance with the obligations laid down in the Equality Act or other breach of the provisions of the Act, the Ombudsman shall provide advice and guidance to ensure that the unlawful conduct is not continued or repeated. In addition, the Ombudsman may take measures towards reaching settlement in cases involving discrimination within the meaning of the Equality Act. In cases of discrimination, the Ombudsman shall issue an opinion on the interpretation of the Equality Act. The opinions issued by the Ombudsman are given by way of recommendation.

c. in the field of consumer legislation;

According to the Consumer Protection Act, a business may be prohibited from continuing or repeating the use of any practice that violates the provisions of the Act or any Decrees issued on the basis of the same, or a practice comparable to the same. A business may also be prohibited from continuing or repeating the use of any unfair contract term. Prohibitions shall be reinforced by a conditional fine.

According to the Act on Class Actions, in civil cases between a consumer and a trader, the Consumer Ombudsman and the organisation designated as a qualified entity may bring a class action on behalf of a consumer group. In principle, legal aid is provided for all kinds of legal matters, also in the field of consumer legislation.

Consumer Advisory Services and a Consumer Disputes Board operate in connection with the Finnish Competition and Consumer Authority (FCCA). The Consumer Advisory Services provide information and guidance related to consumer law questions and disputes. An expert of the services provides a legal assessment of questions and instructions for resolving it. The Consumer Disputes Board handles cases between consumers and businesses. These proceedings are conducted in writing, they are free of charge, and no legal assistance is required. The board, however, is not authorised to give any binding decisions but recommendations only. As the names of the businesses who refuse to comply with the board's recommendations are often published by consumer organisations, the decisions are mostly complied with.

The FCCA provides information related to consumer affairs and available remedies on their website: <https://www.kkv.fi/en/consumer-affairs/>

d. in the field of employment legislation;

The Labour Court (<https://www.tyotuomioistuim.fi/en/index.html>) handles and settles disputes concerning the interpretation of the Employment Contracts Act, the State Civil Servants Contracts Act, the Municipal Civil Servants Contracts Act and the law governing the contracts of civil servants in the employ of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. It also deals with disputes relating to the contracts of State civil servants and the collective agreements of employees.

The occupational safety and health authorities operate in five divisions, one at each Regional State Administrative Agency. Under the divisions of occupational safety and health they enforce regional compliance with occupational safety and health laws and non-discrimination in the field of employment. The authorities undertake measures in the case of appropriate notifications and requests that fall within the competence of the occupational safety and health authority. The authorities carry out inspections and can e.g. give advice on the interpretation of legislation. Please see <https://www.tyosuojelu.fi/web/en/about-us/functions>.

e. in other fields, including as regards non-judicial remedies.

In the field of enforcement legislation, the main remedy against enforcement proceedings is filing an appeal to a district court. Other remedies include self-correction, complaint and contested enforcement. A person may also claim damages caused by the exercise of public authority, under certain conditions. Such damages are compensated from state funds.

The Disciplinary Board supervises attorneys-at-law, public legal aid attorneys and licensed trial counsels. The Disciplinary Board deals with disciplinary matters. It is the Disciplinary Board's duty to investigate breaches of the rules of the proper professional conduct, to receive, examine and decide upon complaints made against lawyers in respect of alleged breaches of the rules of the proper professional conduct. The sanctions include admonishment, warning, fine or disbarment permanently from the Association. Lawyers are entitled to appeal the decision at the Helsinki Court of Appeal.

It is possible to notify the Data Protection Ombudsman if a person feels that the controller has refused their request regarding their data without adequate grounds. In some cases, the Data Protection Ombudsman can then order the controller to fulfil the request.

The Supreme overseers of legality, the Parliamentary Ombudsman and the Chancellor of Justice of the Government are independent in their task to supervise the legality of the activities of courts, authorities and other public officials. Their supervision powers are guaranteed by the Constitution.

2. Does your Member State provide information on the available remedies, and the steps to be taken during a judicial process / when accessing non-judicial remedies:

a. To parties of criminal proceedings;

Yes. Please see <https://oikeus.fi/en/index.html#>.
(<https://oikeus.fi/tuomioistuimet/en/index/asiat/rikosasiat/keitaasiankasittelyynosallistuu.html#>)

b. To parties of civil proceedings;

Yes. Please see <https://oikeus.fi/en/index.html#>.

c. To parties of administrative proceedings;

A decision on which a judicial review may be requested shall be accompanied with instructions for requesting a judicial review (i.e. appeal instructions). They shall indicate: 1) the appellate authority; 2) the authority to which the appeal document is to be submitted; and 3) the time allowed for appeal and the date from which it is calculated. The appeal instructions shall explain the requirements concerning the contents and annexes of the appeal document and its delivery (Administrative Procedure Act 47 §).

If an appeal is prohibited under a special provision or if no appeal may be made against the decision, the decision shall specify the provision under which an appeal is not possible (Administrative Procedure Act 48 §).

d. Persons accessing non-judicial remedies.

Yes. Each authority provides information on their website. Please see a list of relevant authorities here: <https://oikeus.fi/en/index/judicialadministration/otheractorsinthejudicialadministration.html#>.

Please provide more information, including examples of good practice you consider effective.

Victim Support Finland (<https://www.riku.fi/en/>).

3. Does your Member State use digital tools to facilitate access to justice?

- a. Yes**
b. No

If yes, please provide more information on the tools available and your experience on their relevance. Please provide examples of good practice you consider effective.

There are official sites where public can have free-of-charge access to legal texts (finlex.fi), case-law of the higher court/s (finlex.fi), information about the judicial system (oikeus.fi) and other documents (oikeus.fi). General information for citizen is also available on other websites and citizens can make general inquiries via email and telephone.

Automatic processing is available for submitting applications for a summons in the case of uncontested claims, for legal aid applications, for applying for a public aid attorney to be appointed and for attorneys applying for reimbursement for fees and costs from the State and for enforcement applications in the case of private law applications for the enforcement of debts that are based on the district court's ruling or judgement.

Finland has no proceedings that are available exclusively via the internet.

The state legal aid offices have a case management system for legal aid cases (called Romeo) where legal aid is processed. Everything from drafting a legal aid decision, handling a legal aid case until closing a case, happens in Romeo. In the legal aid e-services, clients can make a preliminary calculation of whether they are entitled to legal aid and submit an application for legal aid. Attorneys and defence counsels can complete an application and submit claims for fees and expenses paid from state funds and interpreters and translators can draw up an itemized invoice and submit it to the court or legal aid office. The state legal aid offices also provide remote services, where clients can receive legal aid services via video connection.

4. Which of the following measures are available in your Member State to remove language/ cultural/ physical/ financial/ other barriers for people accessing remedies:

a. Interpretation and translation services;

In civil cases, a party who does not speak Finnish, Swedish or Sámi and who wants interpretation or translation shall arrange this himself or herself and at his or her own expense unless the court, with consideration to the nature of the matter, orders otherwise. However, the court shall ensure that the citizens of other Nordic countries receive the interpretation and translation assistance that they require in matters considered by the court.

In criminal cases, please see <https://oikeus.fi/en/index/mattersand/foravictimofacrime/rightsofacrime-victim/interpretationandtranslationofdocuments.html>

b. Measures to facilitate access by persons with disabilities, such as measures relating to accessibility of court houses and other resources for people with disabilities;

According to Section 15 of the Non-Discrimination Act an authority, education provider, employer or provider of goods and services has to make due and appropriate adjustments necessary in each situation for a person with disabilities to be able, equally with others, to deal with the authorities and gain access to education, work and generally available goods and services, as well as to manage their work tasks and to advance their career.

The authorities must arrange interpretation during criminal investigation and court proceedings also when the victim is a sign language user or if the victim needs interpretation due to another sensory or speech defect.

Act on the Provision of Digital Services includes provisions on the accessibility of products and services for persons with disabilities. These provisions are applicable to, for example, websites of judicial authorities.

c. Legal aid;

Legal aid is provided for free to persons without means. Others are liable to co-pay for the legal aid they are given. If legal aid is granted, the state pays interpretation and translation cost in full.

Legal aid is provided at the expense of the state to persons who need expert assistance in a legal matter and who are unable to meet the costs of proceedings as a result of their economic situation. Legal aid covers the provision of legal advice, the necessary measures and representation before a court of law and another authority, and the waiver of certain expenses related to the consideration of the matter. Legal aid is not provided to a company or a corporation. The legal aid does not cover the

legal costs of the opposite party. The legal aid system used in Finland is known internationally as a mixed legal aid model. Legal aid services employ both public and private service providers. This means that a person entitled to state-funded legal aid can choose whether he or she wants to use the services of a public or private lawyer. No distinction of primary v. secondary legal aid services can be made. The biggest distinction between the services of the legal aid offices and those provided by private lawyers is that the private lawyers are only allowed to handle legal aid cases involving court proceedings. This leaves all out-of-court issues (such as providing legal advice or document drafting) under the jurisdiction of the legal aid offices.

d. Arrangements to refer vulnerable victims, such as victims of domestic or gender-based violence, to support services;

According to the provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act, an authority shall, within its competence, provide its customers, as necessary, with advice on dealing with administrative matters and respond to questions and enquiries concerning the use of its services. Advice shall be provided free of charge. If a matter does not fall within the competence of an authority, it shall seek to refer the customer to the competent authority.

The Nollalinja helpline opened in December 2016. The service is funded with public funding. Calling Nollalinja is free of charge, callers can remain anonymous and discussions are confidential. The persons answering calls are social and health sector professionals. Nollalinja is a low threshold service where callers are listened to and given referrals to further assistance and services. Nollalinja provides help in Finnish, Swedish and English. In 2020 it started providing help in six other languages by using interpretation. During its first year in operation, Nollalinja received nearly 8.000 calls.

Services for the victims of sexual violence have been developed by forming a regional care chain, which harmonises care practices and increases cooperation between professionals and equality regionally and nationally to improve the quality of care, free up the resources of staff and promote the effectiveness of care. The creation of a regional care chain will also reveal the shortcomings in the service chain and facilitate the further development of services. Coordinated services will reduce the risk of the victim falling into the gaps between services or being left completely without assistance.

Finland's first support centre for the victims of sexual assault i.e. the Seri Support Center opened in Helsinki in 2017. Since then, services have been extended and their availability across Finland have been improved. The support center provides medical and legal examinations for victims of rape, trauma support and guidance all in one place. The Seri Support Center is open around-the-clock without referral and provides free-of-charge services for clients over the age of 16.

THL's Barnahus-project improves the quality and quantity of services in cases where children are victims of physical or sexual violence and co-operation between the authorities and coordination of information exchange. It partly utilizes the results of Children's Advocacy Center project (LASTA). Young victims of rape are one important target group, and psychosocial and trauma support is developed for them in collaboration with the Seri Support Centers. Barnahus-project disseminates information of good practices for working with high conflict divorce cases where violence is suspected.

THL maintains an extensive online handbook on services for persons with disabilities, which is a key referral instrument used by professionals. It provides information on, for example, sexual assaults and other violence against women with disabilities. THL has published the "Uskalla olla, uskalla puhua – vammaisen nainen ja väkivalta"- guide on being a woman with disabilities and violence.

e. Fast-track proceedings available for certain vulnerable parties, such as in cases involving sexual violence or children;

In civil cases, to speed up the proceedings, a party may request the district court to order urgent consideration of the matter. A matter may be ordered to be considered urgently only in exceptional cases, when there are very important reasons to do so. When considering whether a request for urgent consideration is to be accepted, the court shall take account of the duration of the judicial proceedings so far, the nature of the matter and its significance to the party.

In the administrative court, the aim is to deal with matters in the order in which they are pending. However, certain matters, such as appeals relating to child protection, dismissal of a public official or involuntary treatment of patients, are dealt with urgently.

In December 2022, the Parliament of Finland passed a law providing that a large number of crimes against persons under the age of eighteen, will be dealt with urgently. According to the new provisions, criminal investigation will have to be carried out urgently, if the complainant is under the age of 18 and the crime in question is an offence against person. According to the new provisions, also the decision to prosecute must be made urgently. The main hearing at the court will have to be started within 30 days after the matter has become pending.

The law will enter into force in October 2023. The aim is to improve the protection of children in criminal proceedings. The Government of Finland expects that due to the law, the length of criminal proceedings will in practice be shortened and that the law will therefore have a positive impact on the position of child victims in criminal proceedings. Finnish law already includes equivalent provisions in cases where the suspected or accused person is under 18 years old.

f. Other measures.

In addition, a working group appointed by the Ministry of Justice has just finished its work on the evaluation of means to make the criminal process more fluent. The tasks of the working group included evaluating measures to make the criminal process more fluent including the phases of criminal investigation, consideration of charges and the court proceedings.

The working group has in its memorandum presented different measures to make the criminal process more fluent and to shorten the overall handling times of criminal cases. These measures dealt with criminal investigation and the measures preceding it and preparatory measures of the criminal matters, for example. The working group has also presented views on digitalization and the enhancing of the activities of the criminal process.

The memorandum of the working group has been sent out for public consultations in the beginning of May this year. https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/164924/OM_2023_16_ML.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

Please provide more information on the measures available and your experience on their relevance. For instance, please provide examples of good practice you consider effective.

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5. Which measures has your Member State taken to ensure the justice system's responsiveness to the needs of vulnerable and marginalised groups? Please provide examples of good practice you consider effective.

Please see above.

6. Does your Member State have in place arrangements to facilitate access to justice by children? Please provide examples of good practice you consider effective.

The assessment of the best interest of the child is an obligation in all judicial processes. Courts and judges are independent in their administration of justice. In practice, limited resources can have an impact on the realisation of the best interest of the child and prompt administration of justice.

In 2020, The Ministry of Justice published a report "[Children's participation rights in Finland: summary of the current state and key development needs](#)". The aim was to incorporate the findings of the report into preparatory work as part of a broader set of measures. Legislative changes have been made after the publication.

The performance management agreement between the Ministry of Justice and the National Courts Administration includes a provision on promoting the standing of children in the administration of justice. As a concrete measure, material aimed at children and youth on how cases concerning them are processed by the court system will be produced. This work has been started and a website for children and youth is being prepared.

In February 2023, the Parliament of Finland passed a legislative proposal under which some small changes are made to the provisions concerning the appointment of a trustee for a child. The purpose is to promote the appointment of a trustee also for child witnesses in situations where the trustee or other legal representative of the child (usually the parents) cannot objectively ensure the interests of the child.

Moreover, legislation is amended to extend the possibility to order that the child's identity be kept secret in a petitionary matter related to a criminal case that concerns a particularly sensitive aspect of his or her private life (in most cases, a sexual offence case). The aim is to improve the protection of the child's privacy.

Further, the possibility to use a recorded pre-trial hearing of victims of some crimes, will be amended. In the legislation in force, this is possible for example in some sexual crimes or in cases concerning children in need of special protection. This possibility will be extended to cases also concerning human trafficking and some related crimes. The amended provisions apply also to child victims. The changes will enter into force in October 2023. The aim is to improve the protection of children in criminal proceedings.

In addition, please see answers to question 4.

7. Does the justice system provide the possibility for stakeholders to bring cases on behalf or in support of victims? If yes, in which areas of law is this possible? Please provide examples of good practice you consider effective.

Consumer protection:

The Consumer Ombudsman can help consumers in collective complaints and class actions. In a collective complaint, the Consumer Ombudsman can obtain a decision-in-principle from the Consumer Disputes Board in cases where several consumers have a similar claim against a particular trader, and the matter can be resolved by a single decision. A class action is a process in which a claim by a particular consumer group against a specific trader is heard as a single case in a court of law. The

court process is meant to find a solution that benefits all consumers who have joined the group. Only the Consumer Ombudsman can file for class action and represent the plaintiffs.

Representative and group actions can be brought to safeguard the rights of consumers and the common interests of consumers. The representative action will improve consumers' access to compensation for breaches of consumer rights. A representative action may be brought for the prohibition of the trader's conduct and for compensation for damage to consumers.

The action may be brought on behalf of consumers by organisations and certain authorities. This means that individual consumers will not have to act alone. In addition to consumer trade, representative actions may also be brought in matters such as data protection, financial services, transport or electronic communications. A representative action may be brought on behalf of consumers by a so-called qualified entity. The qualified entity may be either a consumer organisation or an authority.

In order for an organisation to represent a consumer group, it must first apply to the Ministry of Justice for designation as a qualified unit. The designation requires that the organisation's activities are established and public. In addition, according to its own rules, it must protect the interests of consumers. It must also be non-profit-making and independent.

Other victims:

Under the Non-Discrimination Act, the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman can also bring an individual case concerning discrimination to the National Non-Discrimination and Equality Tribunal or a court of law to be resolved. The Non-Discrimination Ombudsman can assist victims of discrimination in court proceedings in the case at the Ombudsman's discretion. However, acting as a legal adviser is exceptional, and as a rule, it is only done in cases that have significance in principle with regard to the interpretation of the Non-discrimination Act and the prohibition of discrimination.

The Non-Discrimination Ombudsman is allowed to take cases in which there is no identified victim to the National Non-Discrimination and Equality Tribunal.

The Ombudsman for Equality can bring illegal activity before the National Non-Discrimination and Equality Tribunal. The Ombudsman may also assist a person who has been the subject of discrimination in a legal action regarding compensation or reimbursement provided that the matter is of significant importance for the application of the Equality Act.

8. Which challenges or points of development have been identified in your Member State regarding effective legal protection?

The Government report on administration of justice (Publications of the Finnish Government 2022:67, <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-383-918-2>) identifies the excessive length of legal proceedings and the high cost of trials as key problems regarding effective legal protection. The proposals for measures are grouped in the following categories: ensuring sufficient resources for the administration of justice, improving the internal structures and processes, improving the availability of legal services and customer service.

The Parliamentary Ombudsman has found it problematic that Finnish statutory law does not provide for a general obligation for the public authorities to compensate damages in cases of violation of fundamental and human rights (see e.g. The Report of the Parliamentary Ombudsman for the Year 2020 p. 160). A [report](#) on a public entity's liability for damages was published in the beginning of the year 2023. The report was prepared by a working group that included representatives from the ministries,

the Finnish NHRI and other stakeholders. The report suggests that provisions on a public entity's liability for damages for a violation of human rights or fundamental rights would be added to the Tort Liability Act. The right to compensation would be secondary to other legal remedies and would be applicable when other legal remedies are not available.

[The Parliamentary Ombudman's annual report of 2021](#) states that delays in legal proceedings remain a problem in Finland, and the coronavirus epidemic has exacerbated the situation. Despite legislative reforms to improve the situation, court cases can still take an unreasonably long time. This can be a serious problem in particular for matters that require urgent handling. In criminal cases, the total duration of the process depends on the length of the pre-trial investigation, which may be exceptionally long in many complex cases, such as financial crimes. The number of exceptionally extensive cases and sets of cases has increased. It has become clear that the current criminal process and appeal system are not designed to handle such cases. Delays in the processing of criminal cases are also partly caused by under-resourcing across the criminal process system – the police, prosecutors and courts. The project to enhance criminal proceedings (OM046:00/2020) set by the Ministry of Justice has assessed ways of improving the efficiency of criminal proceedings and speeding up the processing of criminal cases as well as the need to amend the Criminal Investigations Act. The project ended on 31 December 2021. The same issues as well as the high cost of trials are raised in the [2022 report](#), currently available only in Finnish.

9. *Is there any significant, recent case-law from your Member States on ensuring effective legal protection, which you would like to mention?*

10. *Are there any significant, recent decisions by equality bodies or other non-judicial remedies on ensuring effective legal protection, which you would like to mention?*