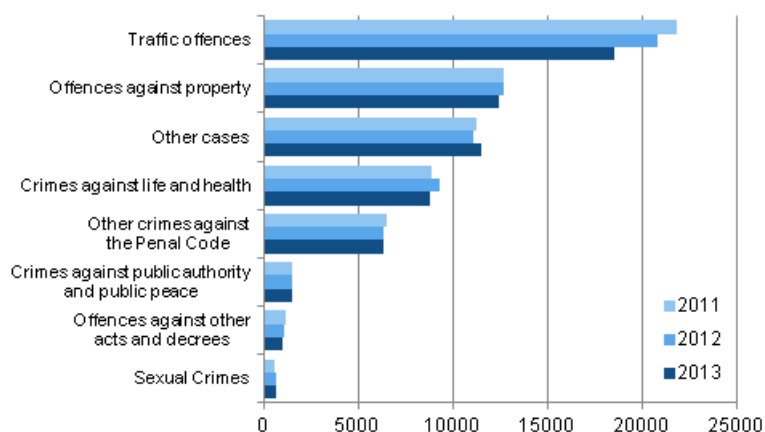


# Decisions by district courts in criminal cases 2013

## Number of criminal cases decided by district courts decreased further

According to Statistics Finland, a total of 60,700 penal cases were decided by district courts in 2013, which is 2,900 fewer cases than one year ago. A total of 48,200 criminal cases against the Penal Code were decided and 1,000 criminal cases against other acts and decrees. In addition, district courts decided 11,500 other penal cases. There were 73,000 defendants in penal cases that appeared before district courts.

### Penal cases decided by district courts in 2011 to 2013



Traffic offences were handled most by district courts and they represented 31 per cent of all criminal cases. The number of traffic offences decreased by 11 per cent from the previous year. All of the largest traffic offence groups decreased in 2013. Drunken driving cases declined by 11 per cent, aggravated drunken driving cases by 12 per cent, waterway, air or rail traffic drunkenness by 27 per cent, and endangering of traffic safety by 19 per cent. Only aggravated endangering of traffic safety remained on the 2012 level.

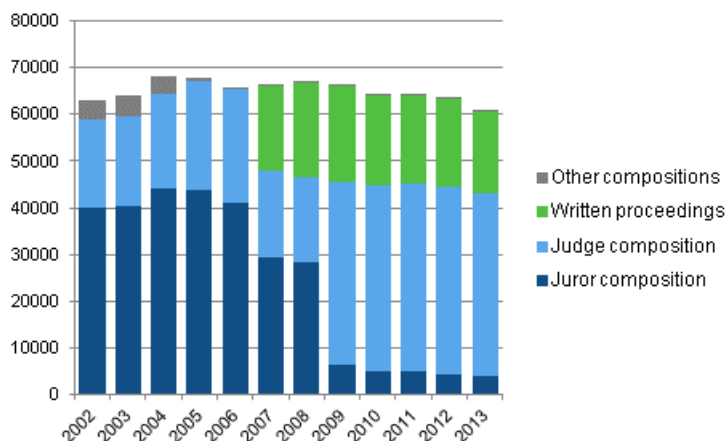
District courts processed two per cent fewer offences against property than last year. In absolute numbers, petty thefts increased most and in relative terms, smuggling and aggravated forgery increased most. The two biggest groups of offences against property, theft and fraud, decreased.

Crimes against life and health declined by six per cent. This was mainly caused by a decrease in assault crimes (including petty and aggravated assault). The number of sexual crimes also decreased in district courts, which was caused by the number of rapes falling by more than one-fifth. However, the number of cases involving sexual abuse of a child remained at the same level as in 2012. Narcotics offences (including manufacturing and use) increased, although aggravated narcotics offences diminished.

***The share of jurors has decreased further, 93 per cent of decisions in judge compositions or in writing***

In district court, the main hearing of criminal cases can be carried out in a juror composition, a composition of one judge or a composition of three judges. The number of juror proceedings has decreased considerably over the past years. As a result of a legislative amendment that entered into force at the beginning of 2009, jurors only participate in the processing of more serious crimes and crimes of high social importance. In 2013, altogether 3,900 cases, or six per cent of criminal cases at district courts, were decided in a juror composition. For example, all manslaughter cases, 96 per cent of cases involving sexual abuse of a child, and 94 per cent of destructions were decided in a juror composition. Handling of cases in a juror composition took, on average, 5.3 months.

**Decision compositions of criminal cases decided by district courts in 2002 to 2013**



A majority of criminal cases at district courts are decided in a composition of one judge. In 2013, these cases totalled 39,200, or 65 per cent of all cases. With one judge processing, the handling of a case took, on average, 4.1 months.

A total of 17,400 cases, or 29 per cent of all criminal cases were decided in written proceedings. Usually, written proceedings can in criminal cases be used in less serious and ordinary crimes. The precondition is that the defendant has plead guilty and agreed on written proceedings. Written proceedings are particularly used in traffic offences. In 2013, altogether 78 per cent of waterway, air or rail traffic drunkenness cases, 67 per cent of drunken driving cases, 60 per cent of aggravated drunken driving cases, and 57 per cent of cases involving aggravated endangering of traffic safety were settled in written proceedings. Also, more than one-half of smuggling and petty theft cases were handled in written proceedings. Processing of criminal cases decided in written proceedings took 1.9 months, on average.

Altogether, 50 per cent of penal cases handled by district courts were completed within less than two months. In 13 per cent of cases, the process lasted over six months. On average, cases were decided in district courts in 3.5 months. The overall processing time in criminal cases – the time from when the crime was committed to when the district court gave its decision – was 10.8 months, on average.

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## Appendix tables

**Appendix table 1. Criminal cases pending at district courts by Court of Appeal territory and district courts in 2013**

Territory of Court of Appeal/ District Court	Cases carried forward from the previous year	Cases arrived during the year	Cases decided during the year	Cases carried over to the following year
<b>Regions total</b>	<b>20 848</b>	<b>68 150</b>	<b>60 720</b>	<b>21 950</b>
<b>Territory of Court of Appeal in Helsinki</b>	8 939	18 371	16 090	8 315
Espoo	1 143	2 349	2 201	984
Helsinki	5 974	9 950	8 362	5 402
Itä-Uusimaa	262	1 059	977	299
Tuusula	463	1 383	1 247	527
Vantaa	1 097	3 630	3 303	1 103
<b>Territory of Court of Appeal in Eastern Finland</b>	1 943	8 261	7 642	2 046
North Karelia	306	2 014	1 904	322
Kainuu	186	1 059	868	246
Pohjois-Savo	851	3 205	2 983	877
Etelä-Savo	600	1 983	1 887	601
<b>Territory of Court of Appeal in Turku</b>	4 099	16 616	14 397	4 826
Kanta-Häme	332	1 399	1 237	385
Länsi-Uusimaa	586	1 879	1 678	663
Pirkanmaa	1 518	7 092	6 092	1 736
Varsinais-Suomi	1 484	5 831	5 072	1 836
Åland	179	415	318	206
<b>Territory of Court of Appeal in Vaasa</b>	2 358	10 279	9 117	2 891
Central Finland	666	3 398	3 007	839
Central Ostrobothnia	184	716	664	212
Satakunta	417	2 451	2 197	581
South Ostrobothnia	399	1 951	1 747	455
Ostrobothnia	692	1 763	1 502	804
<b>Territory of Court of Appeal in Kouvola</b>	1 317	7 614	7 110	1 490
Hyvinkää	303	1 313	1 158	351
Kymenlaakso	340	2 061	1 911	415
Päijät-Häme	361	2 413	2 323	404
South Karelia	313	1 827	1 718	320
<b>Territory of Court of Appeal in Rovaniemi</b>	2 192	7 009	6 364	2 382
Lapland	453	1 586	1 357	522
Oulu	1 068	3 249	2 956	1 253
Ylivieska-Raahe	394	1 257	1 235	295
Kemi-Tornio	277	917	816	312

**Appendix table 2. Processing times of criminal cases decided by district courts by decision composition in 2013**

	Decided cases total	Processing time in district court under two months	Processing time in district court two to five months	Processing time in district court six to 11 months	Processing time in district court 12 months or more	Average processing time in district court, months	Average time from the date of the crime to the date of the decision by the district court, months
<b>Compositions total</b>	<b>60 720</b>	<b>30 150</b>	<b>22 475</b>	<b>5 499</b>	<b>2 596</b>	<b>3,5</b>	<b>10,8</b>
Composition of one judge	39 197	16 915	15 520	4 556	2 206	4,1	12,9
Composition of three judges	36	10	10	9	7	7,2	30,6
Juror composition	3 938	1 068	1 826	726	318	5,3	18,7
Military matter composition	116	34	60	17	5	4,0	9,6
Other composition	48	23	11	5	9	6,1	29,0
Written proceedings	17 385	12 100	5 048	186	51	1,9	5,6

**Appendix table 3. Criminal cases pending at district courts in 2002 to 2013**

Year	Arrived during the year	Decided	Combined	Transferred	Returned	Pending at end of year
2002	73 210	63 587	9 601	53	733	17 926
2003	73 210	64 504	6 868	61	643	18 125
2004	78 478	68 134	6 959	63	699	20 748
2005	76 071	67 748	7 224	73	680	19 843
2006	73 616	65 855	7 118	74	665	18 852
2007	72 719	66 472	6 129	74	805	17 480
2008	76 750	66 961	6 091	84	894	19 411
2009	73 203	66 518	5 640	86	769	18 686
2010	74 064	64 509	6 042	82	730	20 577
2011	72 002	64 479	6 091	90	666	20 412
2012	72 942	63 621	5 973	62	607	22 139
2013	68 150	60 720	5 998	72	584	21 950

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Source: Justice Statistics, Statistics Finland