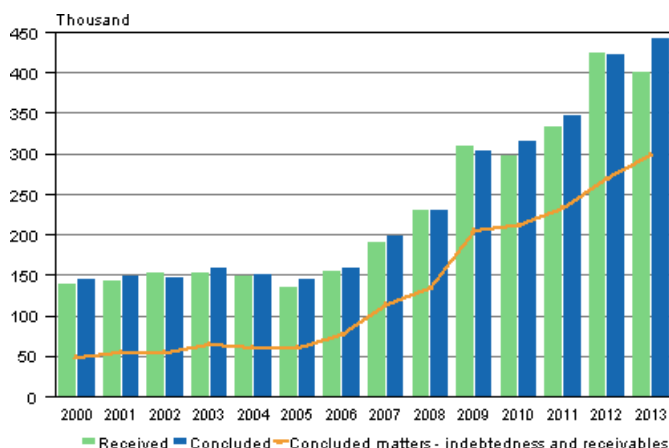


Decisions by district courts in civil cases 2013

District courts decided nearly half a million civil cases in 2013

In 2013, district courts concluded 491,700 civil cases, which is nearly five per cent more than one year earlier. A total of 441,700 civil matters were decided, which is 4.5 per cent more than one year before. The number of petitionary matters was 50,000, which is eight per cent more than one year earlier. These data derive from Statistics Finland's statistics on Decisions by district courts in civil cases.

Civil matters at district courts in 2000 to 2013



As in the previous years, most of the decided civil matters (68%) concerned matters pertaining to indebtedness and receivables. Matters relating to indebtedness and receivables at district courts were such as consumption credits (incl. quick loans) and receivables on credit cards. In all, nearly 299,000 matters relating to indebtedness and receivables were decided in 2013, which is 11 per cent more than one year earlier. The strong growth in the number of matters pertaining to indebtedness and receivables that started after the mid-2000s slowed down in 2010, but continued again from 2011. The growth halted in 2013: only a couple of thousands more such new matters came before district courts than in the previous year. In addition to matters relating to indebtedness and receivables, civil matters were decided in the case groups of service contracts, commissions, agreements regarding the product of work (14%), personal property (10%), and tenancy cases (6%).

Fewer new cases, also fewer cases carried forward to the following year

In 2013, five per cent fewer new matters came before district courts than in 2012. The decrease was caused by the lower number of civil matters. In absolute numbers, most decreased demands for payment based on service contracts, commissions, agreements regarding the product of work (e.g. telephone bill, electricity bill) and on personal property.

The number of matters carried over from 2012 to 2013 grew and the number of matters pending at the end of 2013 decreased compared with 2012. Over 117,000 pending civil cases were carried forward from 2012 to 2013. The number was over 30 per cent higher than in the year before. Matters were carried forward from 2012 most from the case groups biggest in numbers, such as matters related to indebtedness and receivables, and private property, although their processing times at district courts are generally short. At the end of 2013, 73,000 civil cases were pending, which is 20 per cent fewer than one year previously.

Decisions mainly by written preparation

Of concluded civil matters, 99.4 per cent, 438,900 matters, were decided already in the preparation phase. A total of 436,500 matters were decided in written preparation and 2,400 cases in oral preparation. In all, 0.6 per cent of the concluded civil matters proceeded to main hearing at district courts.

Numbers and average processing times of concluded civil and petitionary matters by judgment phase in 2012 and 2013

Cases/Judgment phases		2013		2012	
		Cases concluded total	Average processing time, months	Cases concluded total	Average processing time, months
Civil matters	Judgment phases total	441 695	2,7	422 727	2,3
	Written preparation	436 503	2,6	417 256	2,2
	Oral preparation	2 371	9,8	2 386	9,1
	Main hearing	2 821	12,5	3 085	11,4
Petitionary matters	Judgment phases total	50 032	5,1	46 249	5,2
	Written preparation	46 610	5,0	43 632	5,1
	Oral preparation	1 915	5,6	1 245	7,2
	Main hearing	1 507	8,2	1 372	8,2

In 2013, the processing times of civil matters lengthened in all judgement phases compared to the previous year. Fifty-two per cent of civil matters were decided in under two months and 94 per cent in under six months. In written preparation of civil matters, the processing took 2.6 months, on average, and in matters proceeding to main hearing 12.5 months, on average. The average processing time in all concluded civil matters was 2.7 months. The processing times of petitionary matters remained at previous year's level.

The processing times varied considerably depending on the content of the matter and the judgment phase of the processing. In 2013, the processing times of civil matters were shorter than average in matters pertaining to maritime law, tenancy cases, indebtedness and receivables, and private property. The longest time was spent at matters proceeding to main hearing, which related to insurance agreements, bankruptcy and composition, responsibility for compensation outside contract, and incorporeal rights.

The processing times of petitionary matters were longer than those of civil matters, on average. In petitionary matters, the shortest processing times concerned matters relating to guardianship cases and inheritance and wills, and the longest in matters proceeding to main hearing related to marriage law and cohabiting partnership law as well as bankruptcies.

In 2013, district courts allowed the action, or settled the case as demanded by the plaintiff, in 83 per cent of the civil matters concluded. Ninety-seven per cent of the allowed actions were judgments by default, that is, settlements by the court against the absent party.

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Appendix table 1. Civil cases concluded, received and carried forward at district courts by case group in 2013

Case groups	Cases concluded total	change from the previous year, %	Cases carried forward from the previous year	change from the previous year, %	Cases received in 2013	change from the previous year, %	Cases carried over to the following year	change from the previous year, %
CIVIL CASES, TOTAL	491 727	4,9	117 308	30,9	447 253	-4,9	72 834	-20,1
CIVIL MATTERS	441 695	4,5	95 948	38,0	400 507	-5,9	54 760	-24,2
Family law	1 680	5,5	705	7,0	1 653	4,6	678	4,8
Guardianship and trusteeship	3	200,0	2	.	1	-66,7	-	-200,0
Inheritance and wills	214	7,5	210	22,8	185	-20,9	181	-12,1
Real estate	1 198	2,1	543	9,9	1 129	-2,5	474	-1,0
Tenancy cases	25 510	4,2	4 436	14,3	23 473	-0,8	2 399	-21,9
Personal property	43 273	-6,7	9 792	61,2	37 779	-20,6	4 298	-40,7
— of which indebtedness based on sale of personal property	41 631	-6,8	9 191	68,5	36 297	-21,0	3 857	-42,7
Incorporeal rights	94	-43,4	90	-9,1	77	-50,3	73	-17,0
Indebtedness and receivables	298 850	10,8	59 127	46,1	274 447	0,6	34 724	-20,4
— of which other claim based on indebtedness	293 294	11,2	57 655	46,9	269 490	0,9	33 851	-20,3
Service contracts, commissions, agreements regarding the product of work	63 214	-13,1	15 370	27,0	55 637	-23,0	7 793	-33,1
— of which indebtedness based on other service contracts, commissions, agreements regarding the product of work	61 623	-13,1	13 896	31,3	54 069	-23,4	6 342	-38,1
Maritime law	9	-64,0	41	-18,0	11	-38,9	43	0,0
Insurance agreements	133	-1,5	174	-3,3	100	-23,1	141	-19,4
Right of recourse of the insurer	374	-11,8	119	20,2	305	-26,5	50	-44,4
Responsibility for compensation outside contract	2 386	80,0	3 248	1,5	1 313	14,1	2 175	-28,4
— of which civil (law) cases based on the Damages Act	784	-4,6	674	1,7	1 060	33,0	950	48,9
— of which compensation liability based on a crime	1 489	227,3	1 706	-4,5	207	13,7	424	-72,0
Societies and foundations	1 856	15,1	636	8,9	1 774	12,0	554	-0,4
Title to personal property under distraint	-	-100,0	-	0,0	-	-100,0	-	0,0
Bankruptcy and composition	348	21,7	336	10,2	295	1,4	283	-8,7
Debt rearrangement and company restructuring procedure	13	18,2	6	-40,0	13	85,7	6	0,0
Security measures, evictions, executive assistance	1 303	-3,5	262	9,6	1 180	-10,3	139	-32,2
Other civil suit	679	-5,4	506	-4,0	587	-16,1	414	-18,7
Land rights matters	558	0,5	345	-6,0	548	7,5	335	4,0
PETITIONARY MATTERS	50 032	8,2	21 360	6,2	46 746	3,8	18 074	-4,3

Case groups	Cases concluded total	change from the previous year, %	Cases carried forward from the previous year	change from the previous year, %	Cases received in 2013	change from the previous year, %	Cases carried over to the following year	change from the previous year, %
Child legislation	3 195	12,6	1 481	18,6	2 936	-0,5	1 222	-10,3
— of which decision regarding custody of child and visiting rights	1 413	18,1	798	23,5	1 261	-2,4	646	-12,9
— of which amendment of decision regarding custody of child	1 081	5,6	441	12,8	1 003	-2,4	363	-8,1
— of which change of decision regarding visiting rights	373	24,3	214	19,6	358	7,8	199	-5,7
Marriage law and cohabiting partnership	18 681	2,0	12 062	1,9	17 060	-3,2	10 441	-6,3
— of which divorce (no ancillary claims)	17 158	3,4	11 171	2,7	15 821	-2,0	9 834	-5,7
— of which divorce (with ancillary claims)	1 055	-4,3	806	-2,2	814	-13,1	565	-14,3
Guardianship cases	9 442	10,2	1 089	42,0	8 906	6,2	553	-6,0
— of which appointment of a representative of interests because of declined state of health	6 048	4,0	570	20,0	5 737	0,9	259	-26,0
Inheritance and wills	1 761	8,5	353	23,0	1 669	5,3	261	4,8
Debt rearrangement procedure of a private person	4 813	5,7	2 306	8,4	4 348	-2,0	1 841	-8,4
Restructuring of companies	669	11,3	411	28,4	640	11,5	382	30,4
Other non-contentious civil claims	6 243	31,9	905	7,2	6 205	35,7	867	27,3
Bankruptcies	3 386	3,6	2 147	2,4	3 286	1,6	2 047	-0,8
Enforcement of decisions	540	11,1	158	0,6	500	9,4	118	-7,8
Distrain	1 176	2,9	370	6,6	1 070	-2,1	264	-11,1
Applications regarding registered partnership	126	0,8	78	-1,3	126	9,6	78	13,0

Appendix table 2. Civil cases concluded at district courts by case group in 2008 to 2013

Case groups	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008
CIVIL CASES, TOTAL	491 727	468 976	393 511	360 658	350 541	273 748
CIVIL MATTERS	441 695	422 727	347 997	316 126	304 928	230 148
Family law	1 680	1 592	1 477	1 396	1 400	1 361
Guardianship and trusteeship	3	1	5	6	1	-
Inheritance and wills	214	199	179	211	179	190
Real estate	1 198	1 173	1 173	1 280	1 210	1 111
Tenancy cases	25 510	24 475	24 363	24 811	25 918	24 916
Personal property	43 273	46 390	33 625	27 717	31 632	27 286
Incorporeal rights	94	166	186	168	127	98
Indebtedness and receivables	298 850	269 618	232 783	211 983	205 202	134 502
Service contracts, commissions, agreements regarding the product of work	63 214	72 671	47 579	42 453	33 316	35 025
Maritime law	9	25	23	23	29	30
Insurance agreements	133	135	125	137	110	120
Right of recourse of the insurer	374	424	561	372	362	316
Responsibility for compensation outside contract	2 386	1 325	1 248	1 061	1 124	1 114
Societies and foundations	1 856	1 612	1 437	1 304	1 086	886
Title to personal property under distraint	-	1	2	4	-	-
Bankruptcy and composition	348	286	349	337	197	204
Debt rearrangement and company restructuring procedure	13	11	10	18	17	26
Security measures, evictions, executive assistance	1 303	1 350	1 391	1 422	1 665	1 536
Other civil suit	679	718	804	744	738	788
Land rights matters	558	555	677	679	615	639
PETITIONARY MATTERS	50 032	46 249	45 514	44 532	45 613	43 600
Child legislation	3 195	2 837	2 748	2 695	2 617	2 480
Marriage law and cohabiting partnership law	18 681	18 311	18 795	19 114	19 061	18 937
Guardianship cases	9 442	8 567	8 129	7 504	7 516	7 426
Inheritance and wills	1 761	1 623	1 545	1 517	1 455	1 524
Debt rearrangement procedure of a private person	4 813	4 555	4 311	3 704	3 644	3 723
Restructuring of companies	669	601	611	647	468	352
Other non-contentious civil claims	6 243	4 734	4 417	4 504	5 955	4 871
Bankruptcies	3 386	3 267	3 285	3 260	3 314	2 747
Enforcement of decisions	540	486	482	446	449	458
Distraint	1 176	1 143	1 089	1 051	1 061	1 016
Applications regarding registered partnership	126	125	102	90	73	66

Appendix table 3. Civil matters concluded at district courts by method of instituting proceedings in 2000 to 2013

Year	Cases concluded total	Short-form application, machine language	Short written application	Ordinary application	Application for conciliation	Other method of instituting proceedings
2000	145 102	70 788	65 192	7 787	-	1 335
2001	148 783	70 784	69 109	7 724	-	1 166
2002	147 910	70 481	68 137	7 965	-	1 327
2003	159 808	78 569	71 394	8 709	-	1 136
2004	151 848	68 463	73 461	8 836	-	1 088
2005	145 405	60 064	75 793	8 517	-	1 031
2006	159 136	71 813	77 941	8 277	84	1 021
2007	199 876	112 466	77 988	8 237	96	1 089
2008	230 148	143 563	76 813	8 510	99	1 163
2009	304 928	193 291	101 474	8 821	113	1 229
2010	316 126	178 941	126 687	9 232	111	1 155
2011	347 997	188 572	147 939	10 195	89	1 202
2012	422 727	286 549	125 364	9 694	102	1018
2013	441 695	307 245	123 042	10 349	96	963

Appendix table 4. Civil cases concluded by court of appeal and district court in 2013

Territory of Court of Appeal/District Court	Civil cases total	Civil matters	Petitionary matters
WHOLE COUNTRY	491 727	441 695	50 032
Territory of Court of Appeal in Helsinki	136 757	123 941	12 816
Espoo	20 539	18 185	2 354
Helsinki	66 724	60 433	6 291
Itä-Uusimaa	8 477	7 576	901
Tuusula	14 398	13 258	1 140
Vantaa	26 619	24 489	2 130
Territory of Court of Appeal in Eastern Finland	55 137	49 210	5 927
Etelä-Savo	12 313	10 900	1 413
Kainuu	6 387	5 627	760
Pohjois-Karjala	12 981	11 488	1 493
Pohjois-Savo	23 456	21 195	2 261
Territory of Court of Appeal in Turku	117 730	106 105	11 625
Kanta-Häme	12 253	10 981	1 272
Länsi-Uusimaa	16 389	14 976	1 413
Pirkanmaa	44 991	40 323	4 668
Varsinais-Suomi	42 776	38 721	4 055
Ahvenanmaa	1 321	1 104	217
Territory of Court of Appeal in Vaasa	72 475	64 816	7 659
Etelä-Pohjanmaa	13 457	11 817	1 640
Keski-Pohjanmaa	4 680	4 125	555
Keski-Suomi	23 812	21 589	2 223
Pohjanmaa	10 837	9 533	1 304
Satakunta	19 689	17 752	1 937
Territory of Court of Appeal in Kouvola	58 526	52 261	6 265
Etelä-Karjala	11 309	10 039	1 270
Hyvinkää	12 186	10 931	1 255
Kymenlaakso	16 109	14 377	1 732
Päijät-Häme	18 922	16 914	2 008
Territory of Court of Appeal in Rovaniemi	51 102	45 362	5 740
Kemi-Tornio	6 996	6 321	675
Lappi	10 580	9 293	1 287
Oulu	24 645	21 824	2 821
Ylivieska-Raahe	8 881	7 924	957

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