



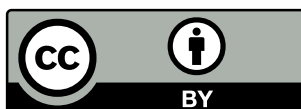
Reform of the Act on Court Fees in Finland - the social functions of administrative courts will no longer be carried out as intended

Mika Launiala and Laura Tammenlehto

Abstract

In Finland, the new Act on Court Fees (1455/2015) entered into force at the beginning of 2016. Court fees were at least doubled and certain proceedings that were previously free of charge became subject to a fee. The objective of the reform was to promote access to justice, improve the cost-effectiveness of fees, reduce manifestly unjustified use of court services, ensure a fair ratio between court fees and the costs of different court proceedings, and achieve a simple and transparent fee system. An impact assessment of the reform was carried out between 2022 and 2023 and showed that the objectives had been broadly achieved. However, the reform has an unforeseen negative impact: the social functions of the courts are no longer satisfactorily fulfilled. The article analyses in more detail how this is reflected in the administrative process of the regional administrative courts and the Supreme Administrative Court. The article is a legal analysis that is supplemented with empirical data. As a societal impact, the article aims to get the officials responsible for law drafting to pay attention to and acknowledge the problem highlighted in this article and to take the necessary measures to eliminate it. As a measure, it was proposed that fees in certain categories of cases should be significantly reduced to provide the courts with sufficient coverage of all types of cases to be able to perform their social functions effectively.

Keywords: the social functions of the administrative courts, good administration of justice, court fees



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