

EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS
COUR EUROPÉENNE DES DROITS DE L'HOMME

FIRST SECTION

CASE OF KOVÁCS v. HUNGARY

(Application no. 9988/23)

JUDGMENT

STRASBOURG

25 April 2024

This judgment is final but it may be subject to editorial revision.



In the case of Kovács v. Hungary,

The European Court of Human Rights (First Section), sitting as a Committee composed of:

Gilberto Felici*, President*,
Péter Paczolay,
Raffaele Sabato*, judges*,

and Attila Teplán, *Acting Deputy Section Registrar,*

Having deliberated in private on 4 April 2024,

Delivers the following judgment, which was adopted on that date:

PROCEDURE

1. The case originated in an application against Hungary lodged with the Court under Article 34 of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms ("the Convention") on 22 February 2023.

2. The applicant was represented by Ms E. Frank, a lawyer practising in Budapest.

3. The Hungarian Government ("the Government") were given notice of the application.

THE FACTS

4. The applicant's details and information relevant to the application are set out in the appended table.

5. The applicant complained of the excessive length of civil proceedings. He also raised other complaints under Article 13 of the Convention.

THE LAW

I. ALLEGED VIOLATION OF ARTICLE 6 § 1 OF THE CONVENTION

6. The applicant complained principally that the length of the civil proceedings in question had been incompatible with the "reasonable time" requirement. He relied on Article 6 § 1 of the Convention, which reads as follows:

Article 6 § 1

"In the determination of his civil rights and obligations ... everyone is entitled to a ... hearing within a reasonable time by [a] ... tribunal ..."

7. The Court reiterates that the reasonableness of the length of proceedings must be assessed in the light of the circumstances of the case and with reference to the following criteria: the complexity of the case, the conduct of the applicant and the relevant authorities and what was at stake for

the applicant in the dispute (see *Frydlender v. France* [GC], no. 30979/96, § 43, ECHR 2000-VII).

8. In the leading case of *Gazsó v. Hungary,* no. 48322/12, 16 July 2015, the Court already found a violation of Article 6 because of the excessive length of civil proceedings.

9. Having examined all the material submitted to it, the Court has not found any fact or argument capable of justifying the overall length of the proceedings at the national level. Having regard to its case-law on the subject, the Court considers that in the instant case the length of the proceedings was excessive and failed to meet the "reasonable time" requirement.

10. These complaints are therefore admissible and disclose a breach of Article 6 § 1 of the Convention.

II. OTHER ALLEGED VIOLATIONS UNDER WELL-ESTABLISHED CASE-LAW

11. The applicant submitted other complaints under Article 13 of the Convention, which also raised issues, given the relevant well-established case-law of the Court (see appended table). These complaints are not manifestly ill-founded within the meaning of Article 35 § 3 (a) of the Convention, nor are they inadmissible on any other ground. Accordingly, they must be declared admissible. Having examined all the material before it, the Court concludes that they also disclose violations of the Convention in the light of its findings in *Gazsó*, cited above, § 21.

III. APPLICATION OF ARTICLE 41 OF THE CONVENTION

12. Article 41 of the Convention provides:

> "If the Court finds that there has been a violation of the Convention or the Protocols thereto, and if the internal law of the High Contracting Party concerned allows only partial reparation to be made, the Court shall, if necessary, afford just satisfaction to the injured party."

13. Regard being had to the documents in its possession and to its case-law, the Court considers it reasonable to award the sums indicated in the appended table.

FOR THESE REASONS, THE COURT, UNANIMOUSLY,

1. *Declares* the application admissible;

2. *Holds* that this application disclose a breach of Article 6 § 1 of the Convention concerning the excessive length of civil proceedings;

3. *Holds* that there has been a violation of the Convention as regards the other complaints raised under well-established case-law of the Court (see appended table);

4. *Holds*
   (a) that the respondent State is to pay the applicant, within three months, the amounts indicated in the appended table, to be converted into the currency of the respondent State at the rate applicable at the date of settlement;
   (b) that from the expiry of the above-mentioned three months until settlement simple interest shall be payable on the above amount at a rate equal to the marginal lending rate of the European Central Bank during the default period plus three percentage points.

Done in English, and notified in writing on 25 April 2024, pursuant to Rule 77 §§ 2 and 3 of the Rules of Court.

Attila Teplán Acting Deputy Registrar	Gilberto Felici President

APPENDIX

Application raising complaints under Article 6 § 1 of the Convention (excessive length of civil proceedings)

Application no. Date of introduction	Applicant's name Year of birth	Representative's name and location	Start of proceedings	End of proceedings	Total length Levels of jurisdiction	Other complaints under well-established case-law	Amount awarded for pecuniary and non-pecuniary damage and costs and expenses per applicant (in euros)[1]
9988/23 22/02/2023	**Attila KOVÁCS** 1971	Frank Evelyn Budapest	19/09/2013	pending	More than 10 years, 5 months and 22 days 1 level(s) of jurisdiction	Art. 13 - lack of any effective remedy in domestic law in respect of excessive length of civil proceedings	6,400

[1] Plus any tax that may be chargeable to the applicants.