

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

FIRST SECTION

CASE OF MEROŃ v. POLAND

(Application no. 42770/21)

JUDGMENT

STRASBOURG

18 January 2024

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



In the case of Meroń v. Poland,

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

Lətif Hüseynov*, President*,
Krzysztof Wojtyczek,
Ivana Jelić*, judges*,

and Viktoriya Maradudina, *Acting Deputy Section Registrar,*

Having deliberated in private on 14 December 2023,

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

PROCEDURE

1. The case originated in an application against Poland lodged with the Court under Article 34 of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms ("the Convention") on 20 August 2021.

2. The Polish Government ("the Government") were given notice of the application.

THE FACTS

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

4. The applicant complained of the excessive length of his pre-trial detention.

THE LAW

I. ALLEGED VIOLATION OF ARTICLE 5 § 3 OF THE CONVENTION

5. The applicant complained that his pre-trial detention had been unreasonably long. He relied on Article 5 § 3 of the Convention.

6. The Court observes that the general principles regarding the right to trial within a reasonable time or to release pending trial, as guaranteed by Article 5 § 3 of the Convention, have been stated in a number of its previous judgments (see, among many other authorities, *Kudła v. Poland* [GC], no. 30210/96, § 110, ECHR 2000-XI, and *McKay v. the United Kingdom* [GC], no. 543/03, §§ 41-44, ECHR 2006-X, with further references).

7. In the leading cases of *Kauczor v. Poland,* no. 45219/06, 3 February 2009, and *Celejewski v. Poland,* no. 17584/04, 4 May 2006, the Court already found a violation in respect of issues similar to those in the present case.

8. Having examined all the material submitted to it, the Court has not found any fact or argument capable of persuading it to reach a different conclusion on the admissibility and merits of these complaints. Having regard

to its case-law on the subject, the Court considers that in the instant case the length of the applicant's pre-trial detention was excessive.

9. These complaints are therefore admissible and disclose a breach of Article 5 § 3 of the Convention.

II. APPLICATION OF ARTICLE 41 OF THE CONVENTION

10. Regard being had to the documents in its possession and to its case-law (see, in particular, *Kauczor,* cited above), the Court considers it reasonable to award the sum indicated in the appended table.

FOR THESE REASONS, THE COURT, UNANIMOUSLY,

1. *Declares* the application admissible;

2. *Holds* that this application discloses a breach of Article 5 § 3 of the Convention concerning the excessive length of pre-trial detention;

3. *Holds*
   (a) that the respondent State is to pay the applicant, within three months, the amount 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 18 January 2024, pursuant to Rule 77 §§ 2 and 3 of the Rules of Court.

Viktoriya Maradudina	Lətif Hüseynov
Acting Deputy Registrar	President

APPENDIX

Application raising complaints under Article 5 § 3 of the Convention (excessive length of pre-trial detention)

Application no. Date of introduction	Applicant's name Year of birth	Period of detention	Court which issued detention order / examined appeal	Length of detention	Specific defects	Amount awarded for pecuniary and non-pecuniary damage per applicant (in euros) [1]
42770/21 20/08/2021	**Maciej MEROŃ** 1981	07/12/2017 to 10/04/2018 06/12/2018 to 13/03/2019 12/04/2019 to 03/04/2023	Katowice Wschod District Court, 08/12/2017, case no. V Kp 656/17 (first detention on remand) Katowice Regional Court, 01/06/2023, case no. XVI K 6/23 (decision to lift the remand in custody)	4 year(s) and 7 month(s) and 5 day(s)	failure to conduct the proceedings with due diligence during the period of detention; persistent reliance, as the case progressed, on charges concerning membership of an organised criminal group; fragility of the reasons employed by the courts	4,300

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