

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

FOURTH SECTION

DECISION

Application no. 73305/10
Juho Niilo Kalevi SILLANPÄÄ
against Finland

The European Court of Human Rights (Fourth Section), sitting on 12 February 2013 as a Committee composed of:

George Nicolaou, *President,*
Zdravka Kalaydjieva,
Vincent A. De Gaetano, *judges,*

and Fatoş Aracı, *Deputy Section Registrar,*

Having regard to the above application lodged on 14 December 2010,

Having regard to the declaration submitted by the respondent Government on 6 November 2012 requesting the Court to strike the application out of the list of cases and the applicant's reply to that declaration,

Having deliberated, decides as follows:

FACTS AND PROCEDURE

1. The applicant, Mr Juho Niilo Kalevi Sillanpää, is a Finnish national, who was born in 1960 and lives in Helsinki. He was represented before the Court by Mr Janne Kangas, a lawyer practising in Helsinki.

2. The Finnish Government ("the Government") were represented by their Agent, Mr Arto Kosonen of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

3. The applicant complained, *inter alia*, under Article 6 § 1 of the Convention about the excessive length of the administrative proceedings.

4. This complaint had been communicated to the Government.

THE LAW

5. The applicant complained about the excessive length of the administrative proceedings. He relied on Article 6 § 1 of the Convention.

6. After the failure of attempts to reach a friendly settlement, by a letter of 6 November 2012 the Government informed the Court that they proposed to make a unilateral declaration with a view to resolving the issue raised by the application. They further requested the Court to strike out the application in accordance with Article 37 of the Convention.

7. The declaration provided as follows:

> "Whereas the efforts with a view to securing a friendly settlement of the case have been unsuccessful, the Government wishes, in the special circumstances of the present case, to express by way of a unilateral declaration its acknowledgement that the length of the proceedings has failed to fulfil the requirement of "reasonable" referred to in Article 6 § 1 of the Convention.
>
> Consequently, the Government is prepared to pay the applicant a total amount of EUR 2,250. The sum includes EUR 1,350 in compensation for non-pecuniary damage as well as EUR 900 for costs and expenses (inclusive of VAT). In the Government's view, having regard to all the circumstances of the case and to your Court's awards in comparable length of proceedings cases, the above total amount would constitute adequate redress for the excessive length of the proceedings in the present case.
>
> The total sum will be payable within three months from the date of notification of the decision pursuant to Article 37 § 1 (c) of the Convention. In the event of the failure to pay this sum within the said three-month period, the Government undertake to pay simple interest on it, from expiry of that period until settlement, at a rate equal to the marginal lending rate of the European Central Bank during the default period plus three percentage points.
>
> In the light of above, the Government would suggest that the circumstances of the present case allow your Court to reach the conclusion that there exists 'any other reason', as referred to in Article 37 § 1 (c) of the Convention, justifying your Court to discontinue the examination of this part of the application, and that, moreover, there are no reasons of a general character, as defined in Article 37 § 1 *in fine*, which would require the further examination of the case by virtue of that provision."

8. By a letter of 11 December 2012, the applicant indicated that he was not satisfied with the terms of the unilateral declaration on the ground that amounts proposed by the Government were too low, considering the length of the proceedings and the circumstances of the case.

9. The Court recalls that Article 37 of the Convention provides that it may at any stage of the proceedings decide to strike an application out of its list of cases where the circumstances lead to one of the conclusions specified, under (a), (b) or (c) of paragraph 1 of that Article. Article 37 § 1 (c) enables the Court in particular to strike a case out of its list if:

> "for any other reason established by the Court, it is no longer justified to continue the examination of the application".

10. It also recalls that in certain circumstances, it may strike out an application under Article 37 § 1 (c) on the basis of a unilateral declaration by a respondent Government even if the applicant wishes the examination of the case to be continued.

11. To this end, the Court will examine carefully the declaration in the light of the principles emerging from its case-law, in particular the *Tahsin Acar* judgment (*Tahsin Acar v. Turkey* [GC], no. 26307/95, §§ 75-77, ECHR 2003-VI); *WAZA Spółka z o.o. v. Poland* (dec.), no. 11602/02, 26 June 2007; and *Sulwińska v. Poland* (dec.), no. 28953/03, 18 September 2007.

12. The Court has established in a number of cases, including those brought against Finland, its practice concerning complaints about the violation of one's right to a hearing within a reasonable time (see, for example, *Frydlender v. France* [GC], no. 30979/96, § 43, ECHR 2000-VII; *Cocchiarella v. Italy* [GC], no. 64886/01, §§ 69-98, ECHR 2006-V; *Seppälä v. Finland*, no. 45981/08, 11 January 2011; and *Kalle Kangasluoma v. Finland*, no. 5635/09, 15 February 2011).

13. Having regard to the nature of the admissions contained in the Government's declaration, as well as the amount of compensation proposed – which is consistent with the amounts awarded in similar cases – the Court considers that it is no longer justified to continue the examination of the application (Article 37 § 1(c)).

14. Moreover, in light of the above considerations, and in particular given the clear and extensive case-law on the topic, the Court is satisfied that respect for human rights as defined in the Convention and the Protocols thereto does not require it to continue the examination of the application (Article 37 § 1 *in fine*).

15. Finally, the Court emphasises that, should the Government fail to comply with the terms of their unilateral declaration, the application could be restored to the list in accordance with Article 37 § 2 of the Convention (*Josipović v. Serbia* (dec.), no. 18369/07, 4 March 2008).

For these reasons, the Court unanimously

Takes note of the terms of the respondent Government's declaration under Article 6 § 1 of the Convention and of the modalities for ensuring compliance with the undertakings referred to therein;

Decides to strike the application out of its list of cases in accordance with Article 37 § 1 (c) of the Convention.

Fatoş Aracı
Deputy Registrar

George Nicolaou
President