

In Finland, there is state administration and municipality based administration.

### **Finland's administrative structure**

Finland's administrative structure comprises the highest organs of state: the Parliament, the President of the Republic and the Government, independent courts of justice and both central and other public administration.

Central government consists of central state administration, regional state administration and local state administration. Other entities of public administration include local government, administration of the church and indirect public administration.

Local government functions on the principles of self-government. This means that local authorities have a legislative right to determine how to operate. The Åland Islands are autonomous as laid down in the Act on the Autonomy of Åland.

Indirect public administration comprises independent bodies governed by public law (such as the Social Insurance Institution of Finland, the Bank of Finland, the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, and forest centres and universities). Organs, institutions, and foundations, which by virtue of delegated legislative powers, perform public duties, and private individuals, such as supervisors in fishing and animal protection, when exercising public power, also fall within the scope of indirect public administration.

## **Central government administration**

Central government administration consists of the ministries and their executive agencies. There are currently 12 ministries. The overall number of central government organizations totals around 90, including the ministries. Approximately 27,000 public employees work in central government.

The size and functions of each executive agency is different. Besides administrative tasks, the agencies are responsible for functions such as national statistics, information management and registration activities. They are also in charge of furthering developments in selected fields and ensuring that new information in these sectors is disseminated in society. Some government organizations function as government research institutes.

The administrative structure of central government has undergone many significant changes since the 1980s. Various government agencies have been merged or terminated, new organs have been set up, and some government entities have been revamped into state-owned enterprises, of which some have then been corporatized.

### ***Regional state administration***

Regional state administration was comprehensively overhauled at the beginning of 2010. The duties of existing key regional administrative authorities, such as the state

provincial offices, employment and economic centres, regional environmental centres, environmental permit agencies, road districts, and occupational health and safety district offices, were all brought together under two multi-functional authorities. They are the Regional State Administrative Agencies (6 agencies) and the Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment (15 centres).

The Regional State Administrative Agencies (AVI) foster regional parity by executing all legislative implementation, steering and supervision functions in the regions. To this end, the agencies strengthen the implementation of basic rights and legal protection, access to basic public services, ensure environmental protection, environmental sustainability, public safety and a safe and healthy living and working environment.

The Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment promote regional development by implementing and developing government activities in the regions. They stimulate entrepreneurship, labour market functioning, competence and cultural activities, ensure safe and smooth transport operations, a healthy environment and sustainable use of natural resources and are in charge of matters related to immigrants and their integration and job prospects in the regions.

## **Local state administration**

Local register offices, enforcement authorities, local prosecution units and the police are all organs of local state administration covering specific areas of operation. All employment and economic development offices and tax offices are also local state bureaux. The Social Insurance Institution, instead, is an off-budget entity with a widespread service network across local state administration. Additionally, services produced by different administrative sectors have been brought together into citizen's offices in line with local needs and circumstances.

### **Areas of operation in local state administration**

The areas of operation of local state authorities have branched out in recent years, so that each geographical area of operation generally covers the expanse of a whole regional council domain. There are 15 local prosecution units, 22 enforcement bureaux, 24 local register offices and 24 police stations in local state administration.

The network of employment and economic development offices comprises over 200 units while the tax authorities have 23 local tax offices, 7 business tax units and 100 other service bureaux.

## **Municipalities**

### **Finnish local government**

Localfinland.fi is the web site of the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities.

The Association's goal is to promote the opportunities for local authorities to operate for the benefit of their residents.

Our membership consists of all Finnish towns, cities and municipalities. At the start of 2010, their total number was 342.

We look after the interests of local authorities and provide them research, development and other expert services.

## **Local authorities provide the majority of public sector services**

In Finland, local authorities have a broad responsibility for the provision of basic services to citizens. Local authorities have strong self-government based on local democracy and decision making, and the right to levy taxes.

The annual budgets of all local and joint authorities put together exceed 36.5 billion euros (2008). Over 424,000 employees provide services for local residents.

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## **The Tasks of the Regional Councils:**

- **management of regional development work**
- **responsibility for regional development**
- **responsibility for regional planning**
- **key international functions**
- **serving on a broad front**
- **organisation of Regional Councils**

### **Management of Regional Development Work**

Finland's Regional Councils are statutory joint municipal authorities operating according to the principles of local self-government. The Councils operate as regional development and regional planning authorities and are thus the units in charge of regional planning and looking after regional interests. On the basis of municipal democracy they articulate common regional needs and work to promote the material and cultural well-being of their regions.

Regional Councils have also other tasks besides the statutory responsibilities. The Councils act as centres of development for the regions. They also pursue the interests of the region, its municipalities, inhabitants and businesses and carry out research, planning and analyses. The Regional Council is also the organisation for cooperation between the various influences within the region.