

TOIMINTA JA HALLINTO 2002:14

MINISTRY OF JUSTICE  
OPERATIONS AND ADMINISTRATION 2002:14

# *Finnish Election System*



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MINISTRY OF JUSTICE, FINLAND  
HELSINKI 2002

ISSN 1458-6436  
ISBN 952-466-054-7  
Ministry of Justice, Finland  
Helsinki, Finland

## DESCRIPTION

**MINISTRY OF JUSTICE**  
Finland

Date of publication  
19.6.2002

Authors  Arto Jääskeläinen		Type of publication memoranda	
		Assigned by Ministry of Justice, Finland	
		Date when body appointed	
Name of the publication  Finnish Election System			
Parts of publication			
Abstract  General presentation of the Finnish election system.			
Keywords Elections, fundamental rights and democracy			
Other information Contact person at the Ministry Arto Jääskeläinen			
Serial name and number Ministry of Justice, Finland, Operations and administration 2002:14		ISSN 1458-6436	ISBN 952-466-054-7
Number of pages 23	Language English	Price	Confidentiality status Public
Distributed by Ministry of Justice, Finland		Published by Ministry of Justice, Finland	

## **Table of contents:**

1. General .....	1
2. Parliamentary Elections .....	3
3. Presidential Elections.....	9
4. Municipal Elections.....	11
5. European Elections.....	13
6. Appeal against Election Results.....	15
7. Political Parties.....	16
8. Notification of Election Financing.....	18
9. Election Information System.....	19

# Ministry of Justice, Finland

## Election Unit

### 1. General

#### 1.1. Legislation

In Finland through general elections are elected

- the Parliament,
- the President of the Republic,
- the councils of the municipalities (448), and
- 16 Members of the European Parliament.

The foundation of the Finnish election legislation was laid at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1906 the Parliament Act and the Election Act of the Grand Duchy of Finland were passed, and the first parliamentary elections in accordance with these were held in 1907. The first act on municipal elections was enacted in 1917. The first President of the Republic of Finland was elected by Parliament in 1919, and in 1922 an act on the election of presidential electors was passed. In 1994 the President was for the first time elected directly by the people in a two-stage election. After Finland had joined the European Union on 1 January 1995, the Act on the Election of Finnish Representatives to the European Parliament was enacted.

Through an amendment in 1998 all election legislation was merged into one single act - the Election Act (714/1998) - which entered into force on 8 October 1998.

#### 1.2. Central Principles of Holding Elections

All Finnish elections follow the principles below:

**The elections are direct.** Electors (those entitled to vote) vote directly for the person they want to be elected.

**The elections are proportional.** In proportional elections each party or other group gains seats in relation to the votes cast for it compared with the votes cast for other groups. For example if a party gets 20 percent of the votes, it should also get 20 percent of the seats. (This does not apply to presidential elections in which votes are only cast for a candidate, not for a party.)

**The elections are secret.** Secrecy of the ballot means that neither the election authorities nor anyone else get to know for whom voters have cast their votes or whether they have returned an empty ballot.

**The right to vote is universal and equal.** A universal franchise signifies that the right to vote only depends on requirements which citizens usually fulfil. For example the only requirements in the parliamentary elections are: Finnish citizenship and 18 years age. An equal franchise means that every person entitled to vote has an equal right to influence the election results, i.e. everyone has the same number of votes. In general elections everybody has one vote.

**Voting is personal.** The right to vote may not be used through an agent.

**Voting takes place in front of election authorities.** The reason for this is an attempt to guarantee that the elections are trustworthy, the voters may freely express their will, and that secrecy is maintained. The election authorities usually are fiduciary representatives.

**The system is a combination of voting for individuals and parties.** A vote goes both to a party and a person. (This does not apply to presidential elections in which votes are only cast for a candidate, not for a party.)

### 1.3. Authorities

The supreme election authority is

- the Ministry of Justice (election unit) which is generally responsible for carrying out elections.

Local authorities are

- electoral district committees (15) and
- municipal authorities:
  - the central election committees of the municipalities (448),
  - election committees at the polling stations (approx. 3000),
  - election commissioners at advance polling stations (approx. 600) and
  - electoral commissions (voting in prisons, hospitals etc.).

Other election authorities are

- the Population Register Centre which sees to the compilation of the voting register and
- the Ministry of Foreign Affairs which takes care of the advance voting abroad.

## **2. Parliamentary Elections**

### **2.1. General**

According to the Finnish Constitution sovereign power in Finland belongs to the people, represented by Parliament convened in session. The Finnish Parliament is unicameral and comprises 200 representatives who are elected every fourth year. Election day is the third Sunday of March. The next parliamentary elections will be held in 2003.

On the basis of a reasoned initiative by the Prime Minister and after having consulted the various parliamentary factions, the President of the Republic may dissolve Parliament at a time when it is in session by ordering that new elections be held. Election day then is the first Sunday within 50 - 75 days of the publication of the order. The latest dissolving of the parliament has happened in 1975.

### **2.2. Right to Vote and Eligibility**

Regardless of domicile, every Finnish citizen who has reached the age of 18 not later than on the day of the election is entitled to vote.

Every person entitled to vote who is not legally incompetent is eligible for Parliament, i.e. may enter as a candidate. A professional soldier may not, however, be elected Member of Parliament. In addition, some high-ranking officials such as the Chancellor of Justice and the Justices of the Supreme Court may not be Members of Parliament, and may thus not enter as candidates without resigning from their office.

### **2.3. Electoral Districts**

For the purpose of parliamentary elections the country has been divided into 15 electoral districts in accordance with the division into provinces (Annex 1). A number of representatives proportional to the number of Finnish citizens residing in the district six months prior to the elections is elected from each district. However, from the electoral district of Åland is always elected one representative. Well before the elections, the Government decides on the division of parliamentary seats on the electoral districts on the basis of information in the Population Information System. In the parliamentary elections of 1999 the seats are divided as follows:

Electoral District of Helsinki	20 representatives
Electoral District of Uusimaa	32
Electoral District of Varsinais-Suomi	17
Electoral District of Satakunta	10
Electoral District of Häme	13
Electoral District of Pirkanmaa	16
Electoral District of Kymi	13
Electoral District of South Savo	8
Electoral District of North Savo	10
Electoral District of North Karelia	7
Electoral District of Vaasa	17
Electoral District of Central Finland	10
Electoral District of Oulu	18
Electoral District of Lapland	8
Electoral District of Åland	1
Altogether	200 representatives

## 2.4. Nomination of Candidates

In parliamentary elections candidates may be nominated

- 1) by parties which have been entered into the party register kept by the Ministry of Justice (see chapter 7) and
- 2) by constituency associations established by people entitled to vote.

At most 14 candidates may be nominated by each party in every electoral district or, if more than 14 representatives are elected from the district, at most the number of candidates elected. Parties may form electoral alliances, but the number of candidates nominated by an alliance may not exceed the maximum number of candidates for a single party.

A constituency association for the nomination of a candidate may be established by at least 100 people entitled to vote in the electoral district. Such associations may form joint lists containing at most 14 candidates or, if more than 14 representatives are elected from the district, at most the number of candidates elected.

A party or constituency association shall submit its list of candidates (candidate application) to the electoral district committee of the district where the candidates are to be nominated not later than 40 days before election day before 4 p.m. The same deadline applies to notices of electoral alliances or joint lists.

The electoral district committees examine the candidate lists, especially whether the candidates are eligible, and confirm the nomination of candidates 31 days before election day. The committees also compile combined lists of candidates in which the candidates of all parties, constituency associations and joint lists are enumerated in an order drawn by lot. The combined list contains the following information on the candidates: number (beginning with number 2), name, municipality of residence and title, profession or position. The combined lists of candidates are displayed i.a. in the polling booths.

## 2.5. Compilation of the Voting Register

The Population Register Centre compiles a computer register of everyone entitled to vote (voting register) 46 days before election day. This register contains some of the information on the voters (e.g. name, personal number, electoral district, municipality of residence, and polling station) which was in the Population Information System 51 days before election day.

The voting register is publicly available at the civic administration (*maistraatti*) from day 41 before election day. In addition, everyone in the register is sent a notice of his or her right to vote (card of information) not later than 24 days before election day. The card states i.a. the election day, the days for advance voting, the address of the polling station of the recipient, and the addresses and telephone numbers of the election authorities. The voting register is later used to print out electoral rolls for the polling stations on election day.

Claims for correction of the register have to be submitted to the civic administration not later than 16 days before election day. A correction may be demanded e.g. if somebody considers that he or she has without cause been left out of the register or that the information in the register is incorrect. The civic administration shall decide the claims not later than 13 days before election day. A person not satisfied with a decision may appeal against it to a regional administrative court within seven days of service. The decision of the regional administrative court is not subject to appeal. An appeal to the Supreme Administrative Court is, however, possible in accordance with so-called extraordinary rights of appeal, i.e. an extraordinary appeal or application for the annulment of the administrative decision or for the restoration of lapsed time may be submitted. These are nevertheless extremely rare.

The voting register becomes legally valid at noon 12 days before election day. After this it may not be amended, i.e. a person may neither be erased from nor added to the register and the information may not be changed. The only exceptions to this are the cases in which a regional administrative court or the Supreme Administrative Court reaches its decision after the register has already become legally valid. Then persons who e.g. pursuant to the court decision have been added to the voting register may vote in the elections, but they have to take the decision with them to the polling station and present it to the election authorities.

## 2.6. Voting

A person entitled to vote may vote either 1) in advance or 2) on election day.

### 2.6.1. Voting in Advance

The advance voting begins on Wednesday eleven days before election day, and ends abroad on Saturday eight days and in Finland on Tuesday five days before election day.

General advance polling stations where any person entitled to vote may do so are in Finland municipal offices and post-offices determined by municipalities and abroad Finnish embassies prescribed in decree. In every municipality there is at least one such polling station. In Finland special advance polling stations are hospitals, prisons and some other institutions where only the people who receive treatment or are incarcerated there may vote. In addition, people whose ability to move or function is so restricted that they are unable to come to an advance polling station or a polling station on election day may vote in advance at home, i.e. an election commissioner comes to them to receive their vote. The crew of a Finnish ship abroad may vote in advance on board the ship. The advance voting in ships can begin already on the 18<sup>th</sup> day before election day.

At the advance polling station the voter first has to show an identity card to the election commissioner who checks the voting register to see that he/she is entitled to vote. Next the election commissioner hands over an election envelope and a ballot to the voter who in a polling booth writes the number of the candidate he/she wants to vote for on the ballot. In the polling booth is a combined list of candidates with all the candidates and their numbers. The ballot then has to be folded so that the number can not be seen, after which it is presented to the election commissioner who stamps it. After this the voter seals the ballot in the brown election envelope and signs a covering letter. Finally, the election commissioner seals the election envelope (with the ballot inside) and the covering letter in a covering envelope, which is posted to the central election committee of the municipality of the voter. The central election committee opens the covering envelopes and all election envelopes (which are not opened) are gathered together and sent to be counted to the electoral district committee.

### **2.6.2. Voting on Election Day**

On election day the polling stations are open between 9 a.m. and 8 p.m. There is at least one polling station in every municipality, and the total number is approximately 3000. Voters may cast their votes at the polling station stated in the voting register and on the card sent to them before the elections.

An election committee consisting of five members arranges the voting at a polling station. At the polling station a voter first has to show an identity card to the election committee which checks the voting register to see that the he/she is entitled to vote and that he/she has not voted in advance. Then the committee hands over a ballot to the voter who in a polling booth writes the number of the candidate he/she wants to vote for on the ballot. In the polling booth is a combined list of candidates with all the candidates and their numbers. Next the ballot has to be folded so that the number can not be seen, after which it is presented to the election committee which stamps it. Finally, the voter drops the stamped ballot into a ballot box.

## **2.7. Election Results**

### **2.7.1. Counting the Advance Votes**

The electoral district committees begin counting the advance votes on election day at 3 p.m. at the earliest (for a particular reason at noon at the earliest). The brown election envelopes sent from the municipalities are opened and the ballots within them counted. The results of the advance voting should be ready by 8 p.m. Before this the electoral district committees may not reveal anything on how the counting is progressing.

### **2.7.2. Counting the Votes Cast on Election Day**

As soon as the doors of the polling station have been closed at 8 p.m. the election committee begins a preliminary count of the votes. The committee opens the ballot box, counts the ballots within it, and notes down the votes of the candidates in a particular election protocol. Immediately thereafter the committee informs the central election committee of the municipality of the votes of the candidates, i.e. of the election results in the voting district. The central committee again enters the results in the central calculation system in the Election Information System of the Ministry of Justice. Finally, the election committee seals the ballots in a parcel and delivers it to the electoral district committee before Monday morning 9 a.m.

### **2.7.3. Determination of the Election Results**

The so-called d'Hondt method is used to determine the election results. Thus, in the first stage of the calculation the total number of votes of each group, i.e.

- party which does not belong to an electoral alliance,
- electoral alliance,
- joint list, and
- constituency association which does not belong to a joint list,

is counted. Parties which have formed an electoral alliance are thus treated as a single group, as are constituency associations on a joint list. In the second stage of the calculation the candidates in each group are ranked in order of their personal number of votes. In the third stage each candidate is accorded a comparative index, i.e. the candidate who has received most personal votes is accorded an index which equals the total number of votes of the group, the second best candidate half of that, the third best a third, the fourth best a fourth, and so on. In the final stage all candidates within the electoral district are listed in order from best to worst according to their comparative index, and the representatives elected from the district are chosen from this list.

#### **2.7.4. Publication of the Preliminary Election Results**

The preliminary election results are ready to be published already on the evening of election day. After the polling stations have closed at 8 p.m. the results of the advance voting are published. Thereafter, the preliminary counts by the election committees are entered into the Election Information System as soon as they are ready. Usually preliminary results for the entire election are ready at 11 p.m.

#### **2.7.5. Check Count and Confirmation of the Election Results**

The electoral district committees begin controlling the preliminary count on Monday at 9 a.m. The results of the control has to be ready by Wednesday 6 p.m., when the electoral district committees confirm the final results within the electoral districts and issue letters of appointment to the new representatives.

### **3. Presidential Elections**

#### **3.1. General**

According to the Finnish Constitution the President of the Republic is elected by a direct vote for a term of six years. The President shall be a native-born Finnish citizen. The same person may be elected President for no more than two consecutive terms of office.

The President is elected by a direct vote, if necessary in two stages. Election day is the third Sunday of January. If one of the candidates receives more than half of the (approved) votes cast in the election, he/she is elected President. If none of the candidates has received a majority of the votes cast, a new election shall be held on the second Sunday after the first election between the two candidates who received most votes in the first election. The candidate receiving most votes in the new election is elected President. If only one candidate is nominated, he/she is appointed President without an election. The President assumes office on the first day of the month following the elections.

The two last Presidents have been elected by direct elections in two stages: President Martti Ahtisaari in 1994 and President Tarja Halonen in 2000. Before that the President was elected

- by Parliament in 1919 (President Ståhlberg) and 1946 (Paasikivi);
- by electors in 1925 (Relander), 1931 (Svinhufvud), 1937 (Kallio), 1950 (Paasikivi), 1956, 1962, 1968 and 1978 (Kekkonen), and in 1982 (Koivisto);
- by the electors of 1937 in 1940 and 1943 (Ryti);
- with a special enactment in 1944 (Mannerheim) and 1974 (Kekkonen); and
- through a combination of direct and electoral elections in 1988 (Koivisto).

The next presidential elections will be held in 2006.

#### **3.2. Nomination of Presidential Candidates**

A presidential candidate may be nominated

- 1) by registered parties from whose lists at least one representative was elected in the parliamentary elections preceding the presidential elections and
  - 2) by constituency associations established by at least 20,000 people entitled to vote.
- Each party chooses its candidate according to its own rules and regulations.

The candidates enter as candidates in the entire country. A party and constituency association shall submit its candidate application to the Electoral District Committee of Helsinki not later than 40 days before election day at 4 p.m. The Committee checks the applications and confirms the nomination of candidates 31 days before election day by compiling a list of candidates in which the candidates are enumerated in an order drawn by lot. The list contains the following information on the candidates: number (beginning with number 2), name, municipality of residence and title, profession or position. The list is displayed i.a. in the polling booths.

### **3.3. Right to Vote, Compilation of the Voting Register, Voting and Election Results**

Regardless of domicile, every Finnish citizen who has reached the age of 18 not later than on the day of the first election is eligible to vote. The voting register, which does not change between the first and the possible second election, is compiled as in parliamentary elections (see chapter 2.5.).

The voting proceeds as in parliamentary elections (see chapter 2.6.). Advance voting for seven days is arranged for both the first and the second election. Nevertheless the advance voting in Finnish ships in the first election can begin a week before than it normally begins but in the second election on the same day than advance voting normally begins.

The election results are also counted as in parliamentary elections (see chapter 2.7.), except that the d'Hondt method is not used. The votes of the candidates are counted, and the candidates are ranked in order of number of votes received. If the numbers are the same, the order is drawn by lot. After both elections the Electoral District Committee of Helsinki confirms the final number of votes received by the candidates in the entire country, and informs the Ministry of Justice of them.

If one of the candidates in the first election has received a majority of the votes, the Government declares that he/she has been elected President. But if this has not happened, Ministry of Justice declares that a second election between the two candidates who have received most votes will be held in two weeks. In the second election the Government establishes which candidate has received most votes and thus been elected President.

## 4. Municipal Elections

### 4.1. General

Municipal elections are held to elect the councillors of the municipalities. In Finland there are altogether 448 municipalities, of which 16 are in the Province of Åland. Municipal elections are held every fourth year on the fourth Sunday of October. The last elections were held in 2000, and the next will be held in 2004. In the Åland municipalities elections are also held every fourth year but not at the same time as in the rest of Finland: the previous elections were held in 1999 and the next elections will be held in 2003.

The number of councillors elected depends on the population of a municipality. According to Section 10 of the Municipalities Act (365/1995) the number of councillors varies as follows:

<i>Population</i>	<i>Councillors</i>
at most 2000	17*
2001 - 4000	21
4001 - 8000	27
8001 - 15000	35
15001 - 30000	43
30001 - 60000	51
60001 - 120000	59
120001 - 250000	67
250001 - 400000	75
more than 400000	85

*\*the municipality may decide that the number shall be 15 or 13.*

### 4.2. Right to Vote and Eligibility

Entitled to vote in municipal elections are

- 1) citizens of Finland or another Member State of the European Union as well as of Iceland and Norway who have reached the age of 18 not later than on the day of the election, and whose municipality of residence, as defined by law, is the municipality in question on the 51<sup>st</sup> day before election day, and
- 2) other foreigners who have reached the age of 18 not later than on the day of the election, and whose municipality of residence, as defined by law, is the municipality in question on the 51<sup>st</sup> day before election day, and who at that time have had a municipality of residence in Finland for an uninterrupted period of two years.

Eligible as candidates are persons

- 1) whose municipality of residence is the municipality in question,
- 2) who are entitled to vote in municipal elections in some municipality, and
- 3) who are not legally incompetent.

### **4.3. Nomination of Candidates**

Candidates may be nominated

- 1) by parties entered in the party register (see chapter 7) and
- 2) by constituency associations established by people entitled to vote.

Each party may nominate a number of candidates equalling the number of councillors to be elected (see chapter 4.1.) multiplied by one and a half. Parties may form electoral alliances, but the number of candidates nominated by an alliance may not exceed the maximum number of candidates for a single party.

A constituency association for the nomination of one candidate may be established by at least ten people who are entitled to vote in the municipality. In some small municipalities determined by the Ministry of Justice a constituency association may, however, be established by at least three persons entitled to vote. Constituency associations may form joint lists with a maximum number of candidates equalling the number of councillors to be elected (see chapter 4.1.) multiplied by one and a half.

A party or constituency association has to submit its list of candidates (candidate application) to the central election committee of the municipality not later than 40 days before election day at 4 p.m. The same deadline applies to notices of electoral alliances and joint lists.

The central election committee controls the lists of candidates, especially whether the candidates are eligible, and confirms the nomination of candidates 31 days before election day. The committee compiles a combined list of candidates in which the candidates of all parties, constituency associations and joint lists are enumerated in an order drawn by lot. The combined list contains the following information on the candidates: number (beginning with number 2), name and title, profession or position. The combined list of candidates is displayed i.a. in the polling booths.

### **4.4. Compilation of the Voting Register, Voting and Election Results**

The voting register is compiled and the voting proceeds as in parliamentary elections (see chapters 2.5. and 2.6.). The election results are also counted as in parliamentary elections (see chapter 2.7.), except that in the case of municipal elections the central election committees of the municipalities are responsible for the counting of the advance votes, the check count, the notification of the preliminary results, and the confirmation of the election results.

## **5. European Elections**

### **5.1. General**

The European Parliament has 626 members elected from the Member States of the European Union in proportion to their population. From Finland 16 members are elected.

The Nice Convention (concluded in 2001) stipulates that the maximum amount of EP-members after the enlargement of the Union is 732 and that the amount of Finnish members is 13. The Nice Convention shall enter in force after it's ratification by all member states.

Elections for the European Parliament are held in the Member States according to their national election legislation. In addition to this the provisions of the Election Act of the EU (stipulated in 1976) are followed.

Elections are held every fifth year in every Member State at the same time. The Council of the EU decided that the first elections (in 1979) were to be held in every Member State the second weekend in June beginning on Thursday and ending on Sunday. According to the election statute of the EU the following elections were to be held during the same period, and thus elections have always been held in early June. The Council may, however, unanimously decide to amend this so that the elections are held a month earlier or later, but so far this has not happened. The next European elections will be held in 2004. In Finland election day will be on Sunday.

### **5.2. Right to Vote and Eligibility**

Entitled to vote in European elections held in Finland are

- 1) regardless of domicile every Finnish citizen who has reached the age of 18 not later than on the day of the election, and
- 2) every citizen of another Member State of the European Union who has reached the age of 18 not later than on the day of the election and whose municipality of residence, as defined by law, is in Finland on the 51<sup>st</sup> day before election day, unless he/she has lost the right to vote in the Member State whose citizen he/she is. A prerequisite for the right to vote is, however, that the person registers with the voting register in Finland.

A person entitled to vote may only vote in one Member State in the same European elections, either in his/her home state or in his/her country of residence.

A Finnish citizen, who has registered as a voter in another Member State, is not entitled to vote in the European elections in Finland.

The provisions on eligibility are the same as in parliamentary elections. Thus eligible is

- 1) every Finnish citizen entitled to vote and not legally incompetent and
- 2) every citizen of a Member State of the EU who is entitled to vote and who has registered with and been entered into the voting register in Finland, and who has not lost the right to enter as a candidate in elections in his/her home state.

### **5.3. Nomination of Candidates**

Candidates in European elections may be nominated

- 1) by parties entered into the party register (see chapter 7) and
- 2) by constituency associations established by people entitled to vote.

The candidates enter as candidates in the entire country. Each party may nominate at most 20 candidates. Parties may form electoral alliances, but the maximum number of candidates remains the same, i.e. 20. A constituency association for the nomination of one candidate may be established by at least 2000 people entitled to vote. Such associations may form joint lists with a maximum of 20 candidates.

A party or constituency association has to submit its list of candidates (candidate application) to the Electoral District Committee of Helsinki not later than 40 days before election day at 4 p.m. The same deadline applies to notices of electoral alliances and joint lists.

The Electoral District Committee of Helsinki examines the lists of candidates, especially whether the candidates are eligible, and confirms the nomination of candidates 31 days before election day. The Committee compiles a combined list of candidates in which the candidates of all parties, constituency associations and joint lists are enumerated in an order drawn by lot. The combined list contains the following information on the candidates: number (beginning with number 2), name, municipality of residence and title, profession or position. The combined list of candidates is displayed i.a. in the polling booths.

### **5.4. Compilation of the Voting Register, Voting and Election Results**

The voting register is compiled and as in parliamentary elections (see chapter 2.5.). Well before elections the Population Registration Center sends to all EU-citizens residing in Finland a letter about their voting rights and the procedures that they must follow in order to vote or/and be as a candidate in Finland. EU-citizens must enroll to the Finnish voting register not later than on the 80<sup>th</sup> day before the election day. After that PRC informs the home states of the enrolled EU-citizens that they are going to vote in Finland.

The voting proceeds and the election results are counted as in parliamentary elections (see chapters 2.6. - 2.7.), except that in the case of European elections the Electoral District Committee of Helsinki confirms the results in the entire country.

## **6. Appeal against Election Results**

Decisions on the confirmation of the results of the first and second presidential elections are not subject to appeal. In other elections these decisions may, however, be appealed against to a regional administrative court within 14 days of the publication of the election results.

An appeal may be submitted

- 1) on the ground that a decision is illegal by
  - a person whose interests or rights are violated by the decision,
  - the candidates, and
  - the parties or joint lists which have taken part in the elections, and
- 2) on the ground that the elections have not been held in proper order by
  - everyone entitled to vote and
  - a municipality member in municipal elections.

If a decision or measure of an election authority has been illegal and this clearly may have influenced the election results, the results shall be amended or, if that is not possible, new elections shall be ordered to be held in the electoral district (parliamentary elections), municipality (municipal elections), or in the entire country (European elections).

Appeals against the decision of the regional administrative court may be lodged with the Supreme Administrative Court.

## 7. Political Parties

### 7.1. General

A party is a registered association entered into the party register kept by the Ministry of Justice. Parties are non-profit associations whose main purpose is to influence public issues. One usually becomes a member through a local branch.

In Finland political parties have existed for a hundred years. Until 1969 their position was unofficial. The Party Act (10/1969) enacted in that year changed this.

In June 2002 there are 15 parties in the party register:

<i>Party</i>	<i>Seats in the Parliament 1999-(2003)</i>	<i>Chairman</i>
Finnish Social Democratic Party	52	Mr Paavo Lipponen
Centre Party of Finland	48	Ms Anneli Jäätteenmäki
National Coalition Party	46	Mr Ville Itälä
Left Alliance	20	Ms Suvi-Anne Siimes
Swedish People's Party	12	Mr Jan-Erik Enestam
Green League	11	Mr Osmo Soininvaara
Christian Democrats in Finland	10	Mr Bjarne Kallis
True Finns	1	Mr Timo Soini
Eco-Diverse Party	-	Mr Pertti Virtanen
Senior Citizens for the People	-	Mr Kalle Kaartinen
Communist Workers Party	-	Mr Hannu Harju
Communist Party of Finland	-	Mr Yrjö Hakanen
Alternative People	-	Mr Eero Taivalsaari
Union of Free Finland	-	Mr Ilkka Hakalehto
Liberals		Mr Tomi Riihimäki

### 7.2. Establishment of a Party

The establishment of a new party and the entering of it into the party register requires that rules and regulations as well as a party programme containing the goals of the party are drawn up. Only a registered association may be entered into the party register and only the central organisation of a party is registered. District, local and municipal branches as well as local associations are usually registered associations, but they are not entered into the party register.

The main goal of an association to be entered into the party register must be to influence state matters. The rules and regulations of the association shall guarantee that democratic principles are abided by in decision-making and in the activities. Another prerequisite for the registration of a party is that the association has drafted a party programme which takes up the goals and principles followed in the national

activities, whose final objective is mentioned in the rules and regulations. In addition, signed support cards of at least 5000 citizens entitled to vote in parliamentary elections are required. If the rules and regulations of a party entered into the party register are amended, the Ministry of Justice has to be notified of the amendment, which enters into force only after it has been recorded in the party register.

Only a party entered into the party register may use the abbreviation r.p. (*rekisteröity puolue*, registered party) with its name, and it may no longer use the abbreviation r.y. which signifies a registered association (*rekisteröity yhdistys*). The registration is free of charge.

If a party fails to gain a parliamentary seat in two consecutive parliamentary elections, or if it ceases to be a registered association, it is deleted from the party register. A party may also apply for deletion.

### **7.3. Subsidies to Parties**

Parties receive party subsidy - the provisions are found in the Party Act. Party subsidy is granted by the Government in accordance with the number of seats in Parliament. The use of the subsidy is supervised by the Ministry of Justice. For the purpose of overseeing the activities, accountancy and use of funds of the parties, every party has to submit documents on the closing of the accounts to the Ministry of Justice within three months of the confirmation of the final accounts.

## 8. Notification of Election Financing

The Act on the Notification of Election Financing (414/2000) came into force on 15 May 2000. It provides an obligation for

- those elected Members of Parliament in Parliamentary elections and those appointed Deputy Members when the election results are confirmed,
- those elected Members of the European Parliament and those appointed Deputy Members when the election results are confirmed,
- parties which have nominated candidates in Presidential elections or representatives of constituency associations or their substitutes and
- those elected Members and Deputy Members of the Council in municipal elections

to submit a notification of the financing of their election campaign (election financing).

In municipal elections the notification shall be submitted to the Central Election Committee of the municipality and in other elections to the Ministry of Justice within two months of the confirmation of the election results. The notification is public.

The notification shall include at least the following information:

- 1) elections in question,
- 2) the full name of the candidate and the name of the nominating party. If the candidate has been nominated by a constituency association this shall be mentioned,
- 3) total costs of the election campaign of the candidate, and
- 4) costs of the election campaign of the candidate itemised as follows:
  - a) the candidate's own funds
  - b) contributions received by the candidate, his/her support group and other associations established in his/her support from outside classified in terms of contributions from
    - private persons
    - enterprises
    - party organisations
    - other corresponding important donors.

The value of each contribution and the name of the donor shall be stated separately, if the value is at least 3400 EUR in Presidential elections and European elections and at least 1700 EUR in Parliamentary elections and municipal elections. The name of the private donor may not be given without his/her express consent, if the contribution is smaller than the above amount.

## 9. Election Information System

Data processing in connection with elections has been systematically developed in Finland since 1990. The object has been to improve the election readiness and security, to diversify and expedite the election information service and to economize on resources. As a result of the development work an election information system (EIS, in Finnish VAT) consisting of six subsystems has been in use since 1996. The systems contain:

1. Basic data, including data on i.a. electoral districts, municipalities, voting districts and election authorities.
2. Data on polling stations (polling station register), including data on general advance polling stations and polling stations on Election Day.
3. Franchise data (Voting register) for which data on every person entitled to vote are collected from the Population Information System. A separate voting register is compiled for each election and a polling card is sent to everyone appearing in the register as proof of his or her right to vote in the elections. The register is open to public inspection. Possible claims for correction can be submitted to the City Administrative Court. The voting register becomes legally valid on the 12<sup>th</sup> day before Election Day. The voting register is used at the advance polling stations and the voting of every advance voter is recorded therein. After the advance voting is completed voters' lists for each polling station are printed out from the voting register for the elections on Election Day. The voting register can, however, be used at the Election Day polling station instead of a voters' lists. After the election the voting register is destroyed.
4. Data on candidates (candidate register) in which the following data on each candidate in the elections is entered: name, candidate number, profession, municipality of residence, party/constituency association that has nominated the candidate, and social security number.
5. A centralized calculation system to which the electoral district committees and the central election committees submit their results of the elections as they are ready, using result computation programmes.
6. Statistics and information service by means of which the results of the elections and other statistical data are transmitted to the media and to Statistics Finland.

The election information system also comprises a control and management system. Technically the system is based on an IBM OS390 mainframe and DB2 and IDMS databases. The election information system is owned by the Ministry of Justice, which has made an agreement on its technical use with a private IT-company. The Ministry of Justice is continually developing the election information system in the light of developments made in the area of ADP technology in general.

- 01 Helsinki
- 02 Uusimaa
- 03 Varsinais-Suomi
- 04 Satakunta
- 05 Åland Island
  
- 06 Häme
- 07 Pirkanmaa
- 08 Kymi
- 09 Etelä-Savo (South Savo)
- 10 Pohjois-Savo ( North Savo)
  
- 11 Pohjois-Karjala (North Carelia)
- 12 Vaasa
- 13 Keski-Suomi (Central Finland)
- 14 Oulu
- 15 Lappi (Lapland)

