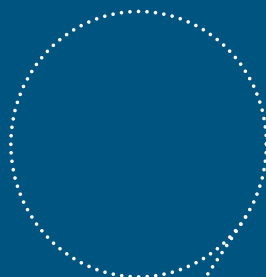


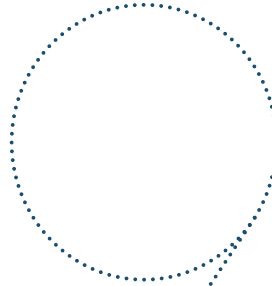
# PARLIAMENTARY OMBUDSMAN

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# Forward

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The Parliamentary Ombudsman has been one of Finland's two supreme overseers of legality for 90 years. In the constitutional document the Form of Government Act, which was adopted by an independent Finland in the summer of 1919, the Ombudsman's task was defined as being to oversee the actions of courts and other authorities to ensure that they were in compliance with the law. Towards the end of the same year, the Eduskunta adopted a set of rules of procedure for the Ombudsman and appointed the first person to hold the post, Representative and Justice of the Viipuri Court of Appeal Erik Alopaeus. Risto Ryti, LL.M with Court Training, was appointed Deputy-Ombudsman. The first month of 1920 was spent on organisational tasks "...especially because finding premises for the Office proved difficult, activities proper could not begin until February," wrote Ombudsman Alopaeus in his report to the Eduskunta.

Early days of February 2010 will thus mark the commencement of the Ombudsman's actual work of overseeing legality. The anniversary of the institution has consequently been traditionally celebrated in early February.

This time, we have decided to mark the anniversary by publishing a jubilee book containing essay-type articles. All of the articles deal with the Ombudsman's oversight of legality and their authors are, in addition to myself, the two Deputy-Ombudsmen and legal advisers from my Office. Many of the articles examine key areas of oversight of legality, such as courts, health care, the prison service and police actions, whilst in others the focus is on theme totalities like discrimination, good administration and children's rights. Likewise looked at are questions relating to powers and some topical discussion themes, such as recompense for violations of fundamental and human rights and the nature of a reprimand by the Ombudsman.

The legal advisers from my Office have a high degree of expertise in their respective fields. For this reason I have considered it very important that their experience and views are brought through this book to the attention of all who are interested in oversight of legality. In addition to the Finnish and Swedish versions, this volume is also published in English to ensure that foreign readers have the opportunity to acquaint themselves with Finnish oversight of legality as broadly as possible.

The themes of the articles are the authors' own choice, and thus the book is not intended as a comprehensive presentation of the Ombudsman's oversight of legality. Hopefully, however, it will convey to the reader a picture of the questions, problems and challenges that arise in this work, those that have arisen in the past, the ones we are currently facing and those that we are likely to face in the future. □□□□

Helsinki 4.12.2009

*Riitta-Leena Paunio*

Parliamentary Ombudsman of Finland

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