



Strategy for the Courts of Denmark 2023-2027

The Courts' Roles and Responsibilities

The Courts have the judicial power according to the Danish Constitution.

The Courts safeguard our democracy, the rule of law, and the legal rights of the individual.

The Courts decide criminal cases and disputes between individuals, companies, and public authorities. The courts decide on the legality of the actions of authorities and the compliance of legislation with the Constitution and Denmark's international obligations. The courts also process enforcement cases, probate cases, and land registration.

The Courts must ensure equality before the law for all individuals and protect them from abuse of power. According to the Constitution, judges are thus independent – they must only follow the law and be impartial when making decisions. They must not be influenced by political or any other irrelevant interests.

Background of the Strategy

The Courts of Denmark ensure equality before the law and access to justice and fairness. The courts are thus a prerequisite for security and democracy in Denmark and for a well-functioning rule of law.

In a rapidly changing world, it is even more important to protect this socially vital role and maintain trust in the Danish judiciary. Therefore, the courts must continue to deliver correct decisions in a timely manner.

In recent years, the courts have received increasingly more and complex cases without a corresponding increase in resources, leading to longer processing times in several areas. Therefore, a clear priority in the upcoming strategy period will be to reduce the number of pending cases and ensure proper framework conditions that enable a reduction in processing times. Furthermore, there must be a continued focus on developing the courts in line with the needs of the surrounding world and its users.

The values and objectives of the courts have been maintained from the previous strategy of 2019-2022, while a new mission and vision for the Courts of Denmark have been formulated from 2023. Additionally, a number of strategic focus areas will be established annually to carry out the vision and objectives of the strategy. These elements form the framework that will ensure that the courts continue to guarantee and protect our democracy, the rule of law, and individual legal rights.

The specific implementation of the strategy will be influenced by the financial framework for the Courts of Denmark in the period 2024-2027, agreed upon in 2023.

Values

The courts are driven by strong values, which we strive to maintain every day in every context, externally and internally.

The values of the courts are:

Responsibility

The courts must make correct, well-founded, and understandable decisions in a timely manner. Therefore, we need the required professional and human competencies to perform tasks of high quality and efficiency.

Everyone at the courts has a shared responsibility for the outcome of individual cases and the overall system. Therefore, we share knowledge, and we develop and disseminate best practices.

Credibility

In the courts, we work according to the law and are credible. We are not influenced by irrelevant considerations. We are impartial and neutral, and we are aware that we must always appear as such.

Respectful treatment

We treat everyone properly and with respect. We demonstrate understanding for the individual's situation and background, and we respect diversity. We express ourselves clearly, both in writing and verbally.

Openness and Responsiveness

The courts must be open and accessible to everyone. We collaborate with one another and with our users, respecting the frameworks that apply to the courts. We work to ensure that the courts develop in a timely manner, as an organization and as a workplace.

Mission and Vision

The mission and vision of the courts are as follows:

Mission

The Courts of Denmark are independent and ensure equality before the law and access to justice and fairness.

The Courts of Denmark provide equal and dignified access to justice and fairness for everyone in a timely manner. We safeguard our democracy, the rule of law, and individual legal rights, ensuring equality before the law and protection from abuse of power through decisions that are well-founded, correct, and understandable. The courts are thus a prerequisite for security and democracy in Denmark and for a well-functioning rule of law.

Vision

In a rapidly changing world, the Courts of Denmark must always serve as a guarantor of the rule of law and legal security and as the central place to resolve disputes.

The Courts of Denmark must maintain and strengthen their role as a guarantor of the rule of law and as society's central dispute resolver. Therefore, we must develop in line with the needs of the surrounding world and our users, so that we can meet them on their own and contemporary terms and maintain high trust in the Danish judiciary. We must resolve cases quickly, uniformly, and efficiently. Through insight into society's needs, we will continue to develop the services of the courts, both in terms of content and technology, and communicate to users in a timely manner.

Objectives

Four objectives have been set for the Courts of Denmark for the period 2023-2027, and they serve as benchmarks for particular development areas of the courts.

Objective 1: User Focus

The courts protect our democracy, the rule of law, and individual legal rights. To live up to this, the courts must continue to create value for users and society. Society is constantly evolving – partly due to technology development at an ever-increasing pace – and to meet the demands and expectations of citizens and businesses, user focus is a significant area for the courts.

Objective 2: Short Processing Times

When citizens and businesses encounter the courts, it typically involves a situation that significantly impacts the individual's life and future opportunities. Therefore, it is crucial to receive a decision in a timely manner. Short processing times are essential to ensure citizens' legal security and perceived fairness, whether it involves criminal cases, civil cases, enforcement cases, or probate cases.

Objective 3: Consistency

Consistency is important for the perception of legal security. Citizens and businesses should be treated in a consistent manner, and it is practically significant for users that task execution is organized uniformly across the courts, thereby maintaining – and increasingly creating – predictability for the users. This is also important when it comes to processing times, as it is essential for the user experience to be offered a reasonably consistent processing time, no matter where in the country their case is handled. Greater consistency can help maintain the public's high trust in the courts.

Objective 4: Quality and Efficiency

The Courts of Denmark must be able to perform tasks at a high-quality level, both now and in the future, while maintaining efficiency in task execution. Therefore, it is essential to find the right balance between quality and efficiency, ensuring that correct decisions are made in a timely manner with the best possible use of resources. This places several demands on the Courts of Denmark as an organization.

In addition to these four objectives, the Courts of Denmark will also work towards the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 16 on peace, justice, and strong institutions, including

Target 16.3, which states the following: “Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all.”

Strategic Focus Areas

The Courts of Denmark annually determine the strategic initiatives that will support the realization of the vision and the four objectives.

A significant initiative in the upcoming strategy period will be to ensure the continued digital development of the courts, focusing on activities that create noticeable added value for the courts’ users and employees.

Another significant initiative will be to ensure that the Courts of Denmark continue to attract employees with the right competencies as well as to retain and develop the courts’ skilled and experienced leaders and employees. The Courts of Denmark must remain a good and meaningful place to work with high well-being.

Finally, a third and overarching initiative in the strategy period will be to create the conditions necessary to reduce and equalize processing times between the courts. Currently, the processing times are too long and too varied across the country.

The strategic initiatives and the associated activities will be determined annually in an action plan for the Courts of Denmark.



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