

Martti Enäjärvi fined heavily for years of credit card fraud

The court found the credit card purchases to be unjustified.

Jukka Harju

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The arbitrary use of a state credit card brought a big fine for Martti Enäjärvi, the longtime director general of the Finnish Patent and Registration Office (PRH), on Friday at the Helsinki District Court.

Mr Enäjärvi was sentenced to an 80-day fine for breach of duty and fraudulent use of payment instruments.

The fines amount to more than €8,300 based on Enäjärvi's 2009 income. He is now retired.

The court did not consider the offence to be minor because the amounts were large and the fraud went on for years. The court found that Mr Enäjärvi had improperly withdrawn almost €50,000 in 2005-2010, which was not related to his official duties.

The authorising officer, PRH Director General Eero Mantere, was acquitted. Since 2006, he had been trying to limit Mr Enäjärvi's substantial cash withdrawals.

Mr Enäjärvi justified his Eurocard withdrawals on the grounds that he had to travel a lot abroad and needed to carry cash for unexpected expenses, among other things.

There were many trips, at best more than twenty a year, but they were mainly to European countries.

According to the court, there was no reason to carry cash for such trips.

"Given the long experience of Mr Enäjärvi's official career, it is not plausible that he could have inadvertently overestimated the costs and charges incurred each year by a wide margin," the court said.

As recently as 2010, he raised his weekly purchase limit back to €3,000, after Mantere had lowered it to €500 following the abuses.

Enäjärvi repaid all withdrawals, but with a delay, often after receiving warnings.

The matter went to a police investigation when the State Audit Office intervened in 2010 and urged the PRH to file a criminal complaint.

Original text in Finnish at:

<https://www.hs.fi/kotimaa/art-2000004843914.html>