

**Translation from Finnish**

**Legally binding only in Finnish and Swedish**

**Ministry of Justice, Finland**

**Sign Language Act**

**(359/2015)**

**Section 1**

**Sign language**

In this Act sign language means Finnish and Finland-Swedish sign language.

Sign language user means a person whose own language is sign language.

**Section 2**

**Objectives of the Act**

The objective of this Act is to promote the linguistic rights of sign language users.

**Section 3**

**Authorities' promotion requirement**

The authorities must promote in their activities the opportunities of sign language users to use their own language and receive information in their own language.

In this Act the authorities mean courts of law and other government authorities, municipal authorities, independent institutions under public law and Parliament offices.

Provisions laid down on the authorities also apply to other parties in public administrative duties.

**Section 4**

**Linguistic rights of sign language users**

Provisions on the right of a sign language user to be taught in his or her own language and to sign language classes are laid down in the Basic Education Act (628/1998), Upper Secondary Schools Act (629/1998), Vocational Education Act

(630/1998) and in other applicable statutes on education. Separate provisions are laid down on education, research and language improvement.

Provisions on the right to use sign language and on interpretation and translation services arranged by the authorities are laid down in Administrative Procedure Act (434/2003), Administrative Judicial Procedure Act (586/1996), Criminal Investigation Act (805/2011), Criminal Procedure Act (689/1997), Act on the Status and Rights of Social Welfare Clients (812/2000), Act on the Status and Rights of Patients (785/1992), Enforcement Code (705/2007), Imprisonment Act (767/2005), Pre-trial Detention Act (768/2005), Act on Handling of Persons in Police Custody (841/2006) and elsewhere in the law on different administrative branches.

Provisions of the Act on Interpretation Services for Persons with Disabilities (133/2010) apply to arrangement of interpretation services for a sign language user if he or she is not provided with sufficient and appropriate interpretation service under another act.

## **Section 5**

### **Entry into force**

This Act enters into force on 1 May 2015.