THIRD SECTION

CASE OF MEZAK AND OTHERS v. RUSSIA

(Applications nos. 33681/15 and 13 others –

see appended list)

JUDGMENT

STRASBOURG

30 September 2021

*This judgment is final but it may be subject to editorial revision.*

In the case of Mezak and Others v. Russia,

The European Court of Human Rights (Third Section), sitting as a Committee composed of:

Darian Pavli, *President,* Dmitry Dedov, Peeter Roosma, *judges,*  
and Viktoriya Maradudina, *Acting* *Deputy Section Registrar,*

Having deliberated in private on 9 September 2021,

Delivers the following judgment, which was adopted on that date:

1. PROCEDURE

1.  The case originated in applications against Russia lodged with the Court under Article 34 of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (“the Convention”) on the various dates indicated in the appended table.

.  The Russian Government (“the Government”) were given notice of the applications.

1. THE FACTS

3.  The list of applicants and the relevant details of the applications are set out in the appended table.

4.  The applicants complained of the non-enforcement or delayed enforcement of domestic decisions and of the lack of any effective remedy in domestic law.

1. THE LAW
   1. JOINDER OF THE APPLICATIONS

5.  Having regard to the similar subject matter of the applications, the Court finds it appropriate to examine them jointly in a single judgment.

* 1. ALLEGED VIOLATION OF ARTICLE 6 § 1 OF THE CONVENTION AND OF ARTICLE 1 OF PROTOCOL No. 1 to the convention

6.  The applicants complained of the non-enforcement or delayed enforcement of domestic decisions given in their favour. They relied, expressly or in substance, on Article 6 § 1 of the Convention and Article 1 of Protocol No. 1 to the Convention, which read, in so far as relevant, as follows:

Article 6 § 1

“In the determination of his civil rights and obligations ... everyone is entitled to a fair ... hearing ... by [a] ... tribunal ...”

Article 1 of Protocol No. 1

“Every natural or legal person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his possessions. No one shall be deprived of his possessions except in the public interest and subject to the conditions provided for by law and by the general principles of international law.

The preceding provisions shall not, however, in any way impair the right of a State to enforce such laws as it deems necessary to control the use of property in accordance with the general interest or to secure the payment of taxes or other contributions or penalties.”

* + 1. Admissibility

.  The Court must firstly ascertain whether the applicants maintain their victim status, regard being had to the domestic proceedings instituted by them in connection with the alleged non-enforcement or delayed enforcement of the judgments in their favour. It therefore reiterates that the applicant is deprived of his or her victim status if the national authorities have acknowledged, either expressly or in substance, and then afforded appropriate and sufficient redress for, a breach of the Convention (see, for example, *Scordino v. Italy (no. 1)* [GC], no. 36813/97, §§ 178-93, ECHR 2006‑V).

.  The Court notes that the relevant claims brought by Ms Avilova, Ms Smolina, Ms Demidova and Mr Ilyin (applications nos. 5256/17, 29640/19, 53322/19 and 5490/20 respectively) were dismissed by the domestic courts. Accordingly, it finds it established that at no time did the domestic authorities acknowledge a breach of the Convention in respect of the applicants and that the latter can still claim to be the victims of the violation alleged.

.  As to the remainder of the applications, the Court notes that, even though the domestic authorities have expressly acknowledged that the length of the enforcement proceedings have been excessive and awarded the applicants a monetary compensation in that respect, it cannot accept that the amount awarded to the applicants on account of the violation of their rights is sufficient or comparable to what it generally awards in similar Russian cases. Accordingly, the Court concludes that the applicants may still claim to be the victims of the violation alleged.

.  The Court further notes that these complaints are not manifestly ill-founded within the meaning of Article 35 § 3 of the Convention and are not inadmissible on any other grounds. They must therefore be declared admissible.

* + 1. Merits

11.  The Court reiterates that the execution of a judgment given by any court must be regarded as an integral part of a “hearing” for the purposes of Article 6. It also refers to its case-law concerning the non-enforcement or delayed enforcement of final domestic judgments (see *Hornsby v. Greece*, no. 18357/91, § 40, *Reports of Judgments and Decisions* 1997‑II).

.  Having regard to the nature of the judicial awards in the applicants’ favour (see the appended table), the Court considers that the applicants had, by virtue of these judgments, a “legitimate expectation” to acquire a pecuniary asset, which was sufficiently established to constitute a “possession” within the meaning of Article 1 of Protocol No. 1.

13.  In the leading case of *Gerasimov and Others v. Russia,* nos. 29920/05 and 10 others, 1 July 2014, the Court already found a violation in respect of the issues similar to those in the present case.

14.  Having examined all the material submitted to it, the Court has not found any fact or argument capable of persuading it to reach a different conclusion on the admissibility and merits of these complaints. Having regard to its case-law on the subject, the Court considers that in the instant case the authorities did not deploy all necessary efforts to enforce fully and in due time the decisions in the applicants’ favour.

.  These complaints therefore disclose a violation of Article 6 § 1 of the Convention and Article 1 of Protocol No. 1 to the Convention.

* 1. ALLEGED VIOLATION OF ARTICLE 13 OF THE CONVENTION

.  The applicants also complained about the lack of an effective domestic remedy in respect of the non-enforcement of the judgments in their favour in contravention of Article 13 of the Convention, which reads as follows:

“Everyone whose rights and freedoms as set forth in [the] Convention are violated shall have an effective remedy before a national authority notwithstanding that the violation has been committed by persons acting in an official capacity.”

.  The Court has already acknowledged the existence of a new domestic remedy against the non-enforcement of domestic judgments imposing obligations of a pecuniary and non-pecuniary nature on the Russian authorities, introduced in the wake of the *Gerasimov and Others* pilot judgment by Federal Law No. 450-FZ amending the Compensation Act of 2010. That statute, which entered into force on 1 January 2017, enables those concerned to seek compensation for damage sustained as a result of excessive delays in the enforcement of court judgments ordering the domestic authorities to fulfil various obligations in kind (see *Kamneva and Others v. Russia* (dec.), nos.35555/05 and 6 others, 2 May 2017). The Court has found that the amended Compensation Act in principle meets the criteria set out in the *Gerasimov and Others* pilot judgment and provides the applicants with a potentially effective remedy for their non-enforcement complaint (see *Shtolts and Others v. Russia* (dec.), nos.77056/14 and 2 others, §§ 87-116 and § 123, 30 January 2018).

.  The Court further observes that the applicants made use of the existing domestic remedy. The fact that the outcome was not favourable for them does not mean that the remedy was in principle ineffective. Compliance with Article 13 does not depend on the certainty of a favourable outcome for an applicant (*Ramirez Sanchez v. France* [GC], no. 59450/00, § 159, ECHR 2006‑IX). That said, having regard to the facts of the case and in the light of all the material in its possession, as well as its findings under Article 6 of the Convention and Article 1 of Protocol No. 1 to the Convention, the Court considers that the complaints are admissible but there is no need to give a separate ruling on them (see, *Centre for Legal Resources on behalf of Valentin Câmpeanu v. Romania* [GC], no. 47848/08, § 156, ECHR 2014, with further references; and for similar approach see, *Korotyayeva and Others v. Russia*, nos. 13122/11 and 2 others, §§ 36-40, 27 June 2017; *Kamneva and Others*, cited above, and, *mutatis mutandis*, *Tkhyegepso and Others v. Russia,* no. 44387/04 and 11 others, §§ 21-24, 25 October 2011).

* 1. APPLICATION OF ARTICLE 41 OF THE CONVENTION

19.  Article 41 of the Convention provides:

“If the Court finds that there has been a violation of the Convention or the Protocols thereto, and if the internal law of the High Contracting Party concerned allows only partial reparation to be made, the Court shall, if necessary, afford just satisfaction to the injured party.”

20.  Regard being had to the documents in its possession and to its case‑law (see, in particular, *Gerasimov and Others,* cited above,   
§§ 187-200, 1 July 2014), the Court considers it reasonable to award the sums indicated in the appended table and dismisses the remainder of the applicants’ claims for just satisfaction.

21.  The Court further notes that the respondent State has an outstanding obligation to enforce the judgments which remain enforceable.

22.  The Court considers it appropriate that the default interest rate should be based on the marginal lending rate of the European Central Bank, to which should be added three percentage points.

1. FOR THESE REASONS, THE COURT, UNANIMOUSLY,
2. *Decides* to join the applications;
3. *Declares* the applications admissible;
4. *Holds* that these applications disclose a breach of Article 6 § 1 of the Convention and Article 1 of Protocol No. 1 to the Convention concerning the non-enforcement or delayed enforcement of domestic decisions;
5. *Holds* that it is not necessary to examine the applicants’ complaint under Article 13 of the Convention;
6. *Holds*that the respondent State has an outstanding obligation to secure, by appropriate means, within three months, the enforcement of the pending domestic judgments in the applicants’ favour referred to in the appended table;
7. *Holds*
   1. that the respondent State is to pay the applicants, within three months, the amounts indicated in the appended table, to be converted into the currency of the respondent State at the rate applicable at the date of settlement;
   2. that from the expiry of the above-mentioned three months until settlement simple interest shall be payable on the above amounts at a rate equal to the marginal lending rate of the European Central Bank during the default period plus three percentage points;
8. *Dismisses* the remainder of the applicants’ claims for just satisfaction.

Done in English, and notified in writing on 30 September 2021, pursuant to Rule 77 §§ 2 and 3 of the Rules of Court.

Viktoriya Maradudina Darian Pavli  
 Acting Deputy Registrar President

APPENDIX

List of applications raising complaints under Article 6 § 1 and Article 13 of the Convention and Article 1 of Protocol No. 1

(non-enforcement or delayed enforcement of domestic decisions and lack of any effective remedy in domestic law)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| No. | Application no.  Date of introduction | Applicant’s name  Year of birth | Representative’s name and location | Relevant domestic decision | Start date of  non-enforcement period | End date of non-enforcement period  Length of enforcement proceedings | Domestic order (in euros) | Compensation proceedings  Name of the court  Date of the judgment  Аward | Amount awarded for pecuniary and non-pecuniary damage and costs and expenses per applicant  (in euros)[[1]](#endnote-1) |
|  | 33681/15  25/06/2015 | **Kristina Ernestovna MEZAK**  2005 | Laptev Aleksey Nikolayevich  Moscow | Supreme Court of the Komi Republic, 04/10/2012 | 04/10/2012 | 26/12/2014  2 year(s) and  2 month(s) and  23 day(s) | to register [the applicant] as having a place of residence at ... Kommunisticheskaya Ulitsa, Syktyvkar; respondent party - Department of the Federal Migration Service in the Komi Republic | Supreme Court of the Russian Federation, 13/04/2016, compensation of RUB 10,000 | 700 |
|  | 5256/17  05/01/2017 | **Valentina Ivanovna AVILOVA**  1946 |  | Shelkovskiy Town Court of the Moscow Region, 25/03/2010 | 06/09/2010 | 31/10/2012  2 year(s) and  1 month(s) and  26 day(s) | to register the modifications to the plot of land in the State Cadastral Register | Supreme Court of the Russian Federation, 12/09/2018; dismissed the compensation claim of the applicant | 700 |
|  | 52941/18  01/11/2018 | **Vyacheslav Valeriyevich FROLOV**  1971 |  | Commercial Court of the Krasnodar Region, 11/07/2011 | 22/05/2014 | Pending.  More than 7 year(s) and 4 day(s) | the Armavir housing unit (attached to the Ministry of Defence) is to sign a lease with the applicant in respect of non-residential premises | Commercial Court of the North-Caucasus Circuit, 15/10/2018; compensation in the amount of RUB 100,000;  Commercial Court of the North-Caucasus Circuit, 19/02/2020; compensation in the amount of  RUB 50,000 | 3,950 |
|  | 8038/19  28/01/2019 | **Aleksandr Sergeyevich KOLOSOV**  1991 |  | Kirovskiy District Court of Saratov, 24/10/2012 | 27/11/2012 | 04/12/2018 (date  of the applicant’s conviction)  6 year(s) and  8 day(s) | the Ministry of Construction and Housing Services to provide [the applicant] with a flat ... | Saratov Regional Court, 26/12/2017, compensation in the amount of RUB 150,000 | 3,820 |
|  | 29640/19  23/05/2019 | **Yekaterina Ivanovna SMOLINA**  1963 | Mironenko Aleksey Aleksandrovich  Semiluki | Kirovskiy District Court of Irkutsk, 24/12/2009 | 13/04/2010 | 01/03/2017  6 year(s) and  10 month(s) and  17 day(s) | Ministry of Social Development, Guardianship and Trusteeship of the Irkutsk Region were to grant a housing subsidy in the form of a certificate | Supreme Court of the Russian Federation, 06/11/2018, compensation claim dismissed | 6,000 |
|  | 39818/19  14/07/2019 | **Aleksandra Ivanovna VDOVINA**  1974 |  | Orenburg District Court of the Orenburg Region , 12/09/2007 | 28/09/2007 | Pending.  More than  13 year(s) and  7 month(s) and  28 day(s) | to perform major renovation of the residential building located at 9, Ulitsa Pyatiletki, Pervomayskiy, Orenburgskiy District, Orenburg Region | Supreme Court of the Russian Federation, 21/05/2019,  RUB 10,000 | 5,860 |
|  | 53322/19  24/09/2019 | **Svetlana Yuryevna DEMIDOVA**  1967 |  | Kirovskiy District Court of Yaroslavl, 03/04/2015 | 14/12/2015 | 27/12/2018  3 year(s) and  14 day(s) | to oblige the Yaroslavl Town Administration to provide [the applicant] ..., with housing ... located in Yaroslavl ... | Supreme Court of the Russian Federation, 25/03/2019, compensation claims dismissed | 3,000 |
|  | 5490/20  06/01/2020 | **Valeriy Vladimirovich ILYIN**  1967 |  | Moscow Garrison Military Court, 04/06/2013 | 19/09/2013 | 17/03/2020  6 year(s) and  5 month(s) and  28 day(s) | [the head of the federal state enterprise .... is to pay [the applicant] ...  5,100 roubles; the head of the military unit no. 42829 is to make a requisite severance payment to the applicant upon his dismissal from the army ... | Supreme Court of the Russian Federation, 23/09/2019 compensation claims dismissed without consideration on the merits. | 2,000 |
|  | 5916/20  17/01/2020 | **Svetlana Aleksandrovna GRABLINA**  1997 |  | Kirovskiy District Court of Saratov, 01/12/2015 | 26/01/2016 | Pending.  More than 5 year(s) and 4 month(s) | The Ministry of Construction and Housing Services of the Saratov Region is to provide [the applicant] with housing ... | Saratov Regional Court, 25/12/2018,  RUB 60,000  Supreme Court of the Russian Federation, 27/12/2019,  RUB 10,000 | 5,095 |
|  | 7632/20  24/01/2020 | **Yelena Aleksandrovna SHAROVA**  1994 |  | Kirovskiy District Court of Saratov, 13/06/2017 | 24/10/2017 | Pending.  More than 3 year(s) and 9 month(s) and 4 day(s) | the Ministry of Construction and Housing Services of the Saratov Region is to provide [the applicant] with housing ... | Supreme Court of the Russian Federation, 29/11/2019,  RUB 10,000 | 3,360 |
|  | 8627/20  21/01/2020 | **Alena Igorevna KUCHUMOVA**  1997 |  | Kirovskiy District Court of Saratov, 05/05/2016 | 07/06/2016 | Pending.  More than 4 year(s) and 11 month(s) and 19 day(s) | the Ministry of Construction and Housing Services of the Saratov Region is to provide [the applicant] with housing ... | Supreme Court of the Russian Federation, 25/11/2019,  RUB 30,000 | 4,575 |
|  | 25093/20  20/05/2020 | **Roman Vasilyevich SHORIN**  1992 | Selikhanova Alina Alanovna  Moscow | Tsentralnyy District Court of Barnaul, 10/02/2016 | 16/03/2016 | 02/06/2020  4 year(s) and  2 month(s) and  18 day(s) | to provide [the applicant] with appropriate housing ... in Barnaul, Altay Region ... | Supreme Court of the Russian Federation, 21/02/2020,  RUB 40,000 | 2,420 |
|  | 25099/20  20/06/1992 | **Sergey Anatolyevich MEDVEDEV**  1992 | Selikhanova Alina Alanovna  Moscow | Tsentralnyy District Court of Barnaul, 29/07/2016 | 12/10/2016 | Pending.  More than 4 year(s) and 7 month(s) and 14 day(s) | to provide [the applicant] with appropriate housing under ... in Barnaul, Altay Region | Supreme Court of the Russian Federation, 26/02/2020,  RUB 40,000 | 4,445 |
|  | 26167/20  20/05/2020 | **Nikolay Vasilyevich SHORIN**  1992 | Selikhanova Alina Alanovna  Moscow | Tsentralnyy District Court of Barnaul, 10/02/2016 | 16/03/2016 | 02/06/2020  4 year(s) and  2 month(s) and  18 day(s) | To provide [the applicant] with appropriate housing ... in Barnaul, Altay Region | Supreme Court of the Russian Federation, 20/02/2020, compensation of RUB 40,000 | 3,445 |

1. Plus any tax that may be chargeable to the applicants. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)