

Ms Tarja Halonen
The President of the Republic of Finland



Tarja Halonen is the 11th President of the Republic of Finland and Finland's first female head of state. She acceded office on 1 of March 2000, and was re-elected 2006.

Born in Helsinki in 1943, Tarja Halonen graduated from the University of Helsinki in 1968 and has a Master of Laws degree. She was elected to the Parliament for the first time in 1979, and after that she was re-elected four times, until she assumed the office of the President of Finland.

Tarja Halonen has served in three cabinets and her appointments have been: Minister at the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health in 1987-1990, Minister of Justice in 1990-1991, and Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1995-2000. She was also Minister responsible for Nordic co-operation in 1989-91. During her time as Foreign Minister, Finland held for the first time the EU Presidency from July to December in 1999.

Ms Halonen has paid close attention to issues of human rights, democracy and civil society. Issues concerning social justice and promotion of equality have been central themes throughout her political career.

Mr Mauri Pekkarinen
Minister of Economic Affairs, Finland



Mauri Pekkarinen, born in Kinnula, Finland, in 1947, has a Master of Social Sciences degree from the University of Jyväskylä (1974).

Since 1979 Mr. Pekkarinen has been a Member of the Finnish Parliament, representing the Centre Party. He has acted as Chair of the Parliamentary Group of the Finnish Centre Party between 1999 and 2003. From 1991 to 1995 he held the position of Minister of the Interior. From 2003 to 2007 Mr. Pekkarinen held the position of Minister of Trade and Industry.

During his long and meritorious parliamentary career, before having been appointed Minister, Mr. Pekkarinen has been a member of various committees of the Finnish Parliament. He has also acted as Chair of the Finance Committee and Chair of the Administrative Council of the Finnish Broadcasting Company.

Mr. Pekkarinen has, further, held many confidential positions at national, regional and municipal level. He has, for instance, acted as Chair of the Association of Finnish Municipalities. One of the many positions of trust that Mr. Pekkarinen has held is the position of Presidential Elector at three Presidential Elections.

Ms Anita Mikkonen
Executive Director, Regional Council of
Central Finland



Dr Anita Mikkonen was born in Puolanka, Finland, in 1951. She holds a PhD in Biochemistry from the University of Turku (1990).

Dr Mikkonen has worked for the Regional Council of Central Finland since 2002. The Regional Council of Central Finland is a joint municipal authority responsible for development strategies, objectives and implementation of the same in a region of 23 municipalities and roughly 275 000 inhabitants.

Previously Dr Mikkonen worked as a professor at the University of Jyväskylä and Washington University (St Louis, USA), as Chief Research Manager at VTT Biotechnology and as Director of the Research and Development Centre, Kajaani, part of the University of Oulu. Dr Mikkonen is a member of various working groups and boards at both national and regional level.

Mr Markku Andersson
Mayor, Jyväskylä City



Mr Markku Andersson was graduated from the Jyväskylä University, where he completed two degrees, Master of Social Sciences and Master of Education. Doctor of Education (h.c.) of the Faculty of Education at the University of Jyväskylä.

Before the office of the Mayor of Jyväskylä Mr Andersson has been holding the position of a mayor in two other towns in Finland, first from the year 1989 to 1993, the second from 1993 to 2004.

Mr Andersson has been a member of the Jyväskylä City Council from the year 1977 till 1983, and the member of the Jyväskylä City Board from 1981 till 1983. He has been the Second Deputy Chairman of the Central Council of the Helsinki University Central Hospital during the years from 1989 to 1993, and a member of the Board of Directors of the Company Keski-Uusimaa Ltd. He has been a member in several working groups and delegations of the Council of Europe, he has been the Deputy Member of the Finnish Delegation of the Standing Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe from the year 1990 to 1997, and a Member from 1998 to 2002.

Mr Andersson is the first Vice-Chairman of the Board of the National Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities. He is also a member of the Economy Policy Committee of the Central Chamber of Commerce. Mr Andersson is a member of the Board of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions, CEMR, he is also a member of the Council of the United Cities and Local Governments, UCLG. Mr Andersson is the representative of the City of Jyväskylä as a member of the Board of the Union of the Baltic Cities.

Mr Klaus Rave
Member of Board, Investitionsbank
Schleswig-Holstein, Managing Authority and
Certifying Authority



Dr Klaus Rave holds a doctoral degree in Law and is Member of the Executive Board of Investitionsbank Schleswig-Holstein (IB) since 1995. From 1988 until 1995 he was Head of Division of the Ministry of Finance and Energy, State of Schleswig-Holstein, responsible for energy affairs.

In 1997 he was elected Vice-President of the Brussels based European Wind Energy Association (EWEA), and in 2010 as Chairman of the Global Wind Energy Council (GWEC). Since 1997 he is, among other responsibilities, Head of the Managing Authority for European Territorial Cooperation programmes within the Investitionsbank. For the Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007-2013 Klaus Rave is responsible for the Managing and Certifying Authority.

Mr John Bachtler
Director, European Policies Research Centre
University of Strathclyde



Professor John Bachtler is Professor of European Policy Studies and a Director of the European Policies Research Centre at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow. His research experience is principally in regional and industrial development in Europe, encompassing the regional policies of the EU25 Member States and Candidate Countries, the structural and cohesion policies of the European Union and EU enlargement. He has led EPRC research on regional policy as well as the evaluation of Structural Fund programmes, the synthesis of EU development strategies and the implementation of the Funds. He has published books, chapters, articles and research papers on regional economic development and regional policy as well as on policies for the service sector, multinational location factors, and inward investment policies in Europe and European economic integration. He has been an expert adviser to numerous government departments across Western, Central and Eastern Europe, and an adviser to international organisations (European Parliament, European Commission, Nordic Council of Ministers, OECD). He is also an Academician of the Academy of Social Sciences.

Mr Ole Damsgaard
Director of Nordregio



Mr Damsgaard has since 2005 been managing director of NORDREGIO, Stockholm, - a research institute owned by the Nordic council of Ministers dealing with regional policy and spatial planning. Mr Damsgaard has extensive experience of regional development and territorial planning policies. He has been member of several national and international working and expert groups. Since 2005 he has been associated member of the Nordic Senior Official Committee of Regional Policy. Has for years been a part time teacher at University of Copenhagen in Social and Urban Geography. In the period from 1994 to 2005 Ole Damsgaard was managing director of the Danish Town Planning Institute, Copenhagen.

Mr Esa Kokkonen
Director, The Baltic Institute of Finland



Mr Esa Kokkonen served as Director of Baltic Institute of Finland (BIF) since 1998. During this time, he has gained strong knowledge of non-profit organization management, and planning and management of international cooperation projects. Furthermore his areas of expertise include European regional and external cooperation policies and instruments, as well as administrative, economic and cooperation structures in the Baltic Sea region. Mr Kokkonen holds M.Pol.Sci (Int.rel.) from the University of Turku, Finland, and has also studied international relations and international law at the University of Michigan, USA.

At the Baltic Institute of Finland, Mr Kokkonen is responsible for overall management and direction, strategic management and planning, as well as budgeting. Creation and development of international networks with stakeholders from various sectors of society is also a key element of his work. He lectures frequently on Baltic Sea cooperation and international project management issues.

Mr Colin Wolfe
Head of Unit, Regional Policy, European Commission



Mr Colin Wolfe has extensive experience of working within the European Commission. Some of his previous posts include working within DG Employment, where he was responsible for the EU community initiatives in France and Northern Ireland, and the EU PEACE & RECONCILIATION programme for Northern Ireland / Ireland. He also spent considerable time with DG Enlargement, heading various negotiation teams with the new Member States.

In July 2001 Colin became Head of Unit in EuropeAid, the EU Development aid service covering the Balkans, Caucasus and Central Asia. In 2003 he moved to DG Regional Policy to become Head of Unit for Czech Republic & Slovakia in preparation for their accession. He took up his current role in July 2006 where he is now Head of Unit for European Transnational and Interregional Co-operation covering co-operation programmes over the whole of Europe as well as the development work for the EU Strategies for both the Baltic Sea Region and the Danube Region.

Mr Harry Ekestam
Chairman of the Monitoring Committee of the Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007-2013, Ministry of Employment and the Economy, Finland



Mr Harry Ekestam, born in 1949, has a Master Degree in Economics from the Hanken School of Economics in Helsinki. In the late 1970's he worked as a lecturer in Economic Geography at Hanken and later as project leader for a Nordic project collecting and analyzing data on regional development and regional policy in the Nordic countries.

In 1981 he began his career in Finnish Government, which still continues. All through these years he has worked in the department responsible for regional development, which since 2008 is located in the Ministry of Employment and the Economy. In the beginning of the 1990's he became involved in the preparations for Finnish membership in the European Union and since 1996 he has concentrated on Interreg/Territorial cooperation. Another main task has been Nordic cooperation on regional policy.

Mr. Ekestam has taken part in the preparation and implementation of three successive Interreg/ETC programmes for the Baltic Sea Region. In 2010 he has been chairman of the Monitoring Committee of the current Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007-2013. He is also a member of the national working group for Baltic Sea Region issues, set up by the Prime Minister's Office.

Mr David Sweet
Policy Advisor to the Director General for
Regional Policy, European Commission



Mr David Sweet is the Policy Advisor to the Director General for Regional Policy. As such he is responsible, among other things, for overseeing the policy implications of the macro-regional strategies, and in particular the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. Mr Sweet also involved in a number of other issues related to the forthcoming reform of cohesion policy, particularly relating to more effective delivery and partnership.

Mr David Sweet has had a long career in the European Commission, of which the latter part has been in Regional and Cohesion Policy, working on evaluation of the policy, candidate countries and new Member States (Lithuania, Poland, Romania) and the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.

Mr Sweet is an economist, trained in the UK, but has lived in Luxembourg and Belgium for over twenty years.

Ms Anna Bérczi
Head of Department, Office for the EU
Danube Region Strategy, Ministry of Foreign
Affairs, Hungary

Dr Anna Bérczi, born in 1981, graduated in Law and Political Sciences at the Eötvös Lóránd University, Budapest, Hungary. Thereafter she became specialized in environmental law, and since then she has been working as an environmental lawyer dealing mainly with international and European environmental law.

In October 2010 Ms Bérczi was appointed Head of Department at the Office for the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. From 2009 to October 2010 she was the legal adviser of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Future Generations. During 2004-2008 she worked for the Hungarian Ministry of Justice and Law Enforcement and she was dealing with the implementation of the European Environmental and Agricultural law into the Hungarian legislation. In 2007 she worked for the European Commission's DG Environment at the Directorate responsible for Communication, Legal affairs and Civil Protection. Unit: A.2. Infringements.

Ms Bérczi is a member of the Environmental Working Group of the Association of European Administrative Judges since 2007 and she organises courses for judges dealing with European environmental law in the framework of the European Commission's project "Support for cooperation with national judges in the field of environmental law".

Mr Martti Ahokas
Regional Council of Central Finland, Director
(spatial planning)



Martti Ahokas was born in Helsinki, Finland in 1945; he has a Master of Science (Administration & Economics) Degree from the University of Tampere (1970), updated with the one-year further education programme of NORDPLAN (1991) in Stockholm.

Mr Ahokas has been working as a researcher for the National Planning Office (1970-71), as a planning secretary of the State Provincial Office and the Economic Development Council of Central Finland (1971-73); as the director (CEO) of the Regional Planning Council of Central Finland to the year 1990 and since then he has been working as the director for spatial planning for the Regional Council of Central Finland.

From the year 1981 Mr. Ahokas has been in the Mid Nordic Committee (NOR, SWE, FIN) as an expert, member, secretary and president. He has also been a member of the Steering / Monitoring Committees of Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programmes IIC, IIIB and IVB since the Finnish EU membership in 1996 as well as a member of national committees of statistics (1974-86), regional policy (1976-87) and planning & development.

The President of Finland awarded the honorary title of 'maakuntaneuvos' to him in 2007.

Ms Kaarina Williams
State Chancellery of Land Schleswig-
Holstein, Division European Affairs



Dr Kaarina Williams, born in Villingen, Germany in 1972, has a Master degree in European Studies and a Doctoral degree in Political Sciences.

Since 2008 Ms. Williams has been working within the European Affairs Unit for the Land Schleswig-Holstein being in charge of the Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007-13 as a chair of the German subcommittee and a member of the Monitoring Committee of the Programme.

Between 2004 and 2008 she worked at Investitionsbank Schleswig-Holstein and among other duties she took care of the Managing Authority tasks for the INTERREG IIIB Baltic Sea Region Programme and INTERREG IIIC North.

Before entering the INTERREG community Ms. Williams worked as a project manager at the Humboldt University in Berlin for an EU funded "Research Training Network" called BaltSeaNet, connecting and mobilizing researchers from nine Universities around the Baltic Sea. During this time Ms. Williams also wrote her doctoral thesis on: "Constructing a region: the emergence of Baltic Sea cooperation between 1988 and 1992".

Ms Susanne Scherrer
Director of the Joint Technical Secretariat
Rostock/Riga, Baltic Sea Region Programme
2007-2013



Susanne Scherrer graduated in Political Science and Fenno-Ugristics at Hamburg and Budapest University. She worked as programme manager and consultant for EU financed programmes in Hungary as well as in Poland and the Baltic States. She joined the INTERREG programme in 1998.

Ms Scherrer is responsible for overall programme and human resource management at the offices of the JTS (Rostock & Riga). Her tasks include programme marketing and public relations.

Ms Eeva Rantama
Project Officer & Team Leader, Joint
Technical Secretariat, Baltic Sea Region
Programme 2007-2013



Dr Eeva Rantama graduated in land surveying at the Technical University of Helsinki in 1995. She has a PhD in administrative sciences after her post graduate studies in regional sciences at the University of Tampere and University of Augsburg. Before her employment at the Joint Technical Secretariat she worked as a project coordinator in the fields of rural and city development at the Regional Council of Uusimaa, at the Finnish Ministry of Interior as well as at the City of Munich.

Eeva Rantama has worked at the Joint Technical Secretariat since 2003. She is coordinating the Project Team that is responsible for project development, application and assessment procedure as well as project monitoring.

Ms Elena Kolosova
Project Officer, Joint Technical Secretariat,
Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007-2013



Elena Kolosova graduated in Germanic philology and made studies in Swedish linguistics in Sweden. She worked as a project coordinator for the EU financed programmes in Russia. Later on as the Tacis project manager Elena supported INTERREG IIIA cross-border cooperation programme Estonia-Latvia-Russia.

Ms Kolosova works from the Riga office and her main responsibilities are project development, assessment and monitoring with the special focus on cooperation with Russian and Belarusian organisations.