

European
Elections monitor

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RESULTS

Alexander Stubb is elected President of the Republic of Finland

Alexander Stubb (National Coalition Party, KOK) has won the presidential election in Finland. He won the 2nd round of voting on 11 February with 51.6% of the vote, ahead of Pekka Haavisto (Green League, VIHR) who won 48.4%.

The new head of state benefited from the transfer of votes from the majority of voters for Jussi Halla-aho (Finns Party, PS) and Olli Rehn (Centre Party, KESK). Those who chose Jutta Urpilainen (Social Democratic Party, SDP) or Li Andersson (Left Alliance, VAS) preferred Pekka Haavisto.

Turnout was 70.7%, down 0.85 points on the 1st round of voting. Early voting was even higher than on 28 January, with 46% of Finns choosing to fulfil their civic duty by this means.

"This victory is the greatest of honours for me (...) It is a great victory for democracy in Finland, and I am extremely proud of all the Finns who voted," declared Alexander Stubb when the results were announced. The new head of state said he would "promote peace".

"Alexander, congratulations to Finland's thirteenth president", said Pekka Haavisto, acknowledging his defeat. This is the third time that the ecologist has failed to reach the highest office in Finland, following the presidential elections of 2012 and 2018, when he was defeated by the outgoing head of state, Sauli Niinistö (KOK).

Results of the presidential elections of 28 January and 11 February 2024 in Finland

Turnout: 71.55% (1st round) and 70.7% (2nd round)

Candidates	Number of votes won (1st round)	% of votes won (1st round)	Number of votes won (2nd round)	% of votes won (2nd round)
Alexander Stubb (National Coalition Party, KOK)	882 388	27.21	1 575 211	51.60
Pekka Haavisto (Green League, VIHR)	836 712	25.80	1 476 548	48.40
Jussi Halla-aho (Finns Party, PS)	615 802	18.99		
Olli Rehn (Centre Party, KESK)	496 759	15.32		
Li Andersson (Left Alliance, VAS)	158 579	4.89		
Jutta Urpilainen (Social Democratic Party, SDP)	140 867	4.34		
Sari Essayah (Christian Democratic Party, SKL)	47 847	1.48		
Mika Aaltola (independent)	47 467	1.46		
Harry Harkimo (Movement Now, LN)	17 030	0.52		

Source : https://tulospalvelu.vaalit.fi/TPV-2024_2/en/ehdtulos_kokomaa.html

Presidential election in Finland

11th February 2024

"We are facing a new era in foreign policy, where rules are being challenged, institutions are being called into question, war is on our doorstep and Russia is behaving aggressively, but we are also facing a new era because we are militarily aligned and we are members of NATO," Alexander Stubb emphasised. A few weeks ago, he indicated that the role of the President of the Republic of Finland comprised three functions: *"that of commander-in-chief of the armed forces, that of leader in foreign and security policy and that of guardian of the values of the Nordic country"*.

The powers of the President of the Republic were reduced in Finland in 2000. The essential function of the Head of State remains the supervision of foreign and security policy, a fundamental mission in a context of war between Ukraine and neighbouring Russia. The two finalists in the presidential election share an identical position on the conflict and the threat from Moscow (Finland shares 1,340 km of borders with Russia). The attack by the Russian armed forces on Kyiv on 24 February 2022 united the country's political class as well as its population, who largely approved the country's entry into NATO on 4 April 2023, a decision that put an end to the policy of military non-alignment in force since the 1990s and, before that, to decades of neutrality on the part of Helsinki.

"The fact that we have just joined NATO is of considerable importance," points out Theodora Helimäki, a political science researcher at the University of Helsinki. How things unfold in Finland will be *"largely up to the new President of the Republic"*, she added. *"What kind of country Finland will be in NATO remains an open question for the time being. The new head of state will be the main player on this issue"*, said Jenni Karimäki, a historian at the University of Helsinki. *"The next head of state will leave his or her mark on NATO policy and the way it is conducted between the President of the Republic and the government. Finland will also have to rebuild its relations with Russia, a task not unlike*

that of the Finnish presidents just after the Second World War," says Charly Salenius-Pasternak, a researcher at the Finnish Institute of International Affairs.

Alexander Stubb, 55, originally from Helsinki, studied abroad (Furman University in the United States, Panthéon-Sorbonne University in France). He worked as a researcher at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and then at the European Union. He teaches in various European countries. In 2004, he was elected Member of the European Parliament (EPP). In 2008, he joined the government of Matti Vanhanen (KESK) as Minister for Foreign Affairs. Elected to the Eduskunta/Riksdag, the single chamber of parliament, in 2011, he became Minister for European Affairs. In 2014, he became leader of the KOK party and was appointed Prime Minister, succeeding Jyrki Katainen (KOK) who was appointed to the European Commission. After the 2015 parliamentary elections, he was appointed Finance Minister in the government of Juha Sipilä (KESK), a post he held until 2016, when he lost the leadership of his party to current Prime Minister Petteri Orpo. Between 2017 and 2020, he was vice-president of the European Investment Bank (EIB). In May 2020, he became Director of the School of Transnational Governance at the European University Institute in Florence.

Alexander Stubb thus becomes the thirteenth President of the Republic of Finland. *"I can say with my hand on my heart that I had no intention of running for the presidency of the Republic before February 2022 (...)* In the global political context, however, when the fatherland calls, you have to answer," said Alexander Stubb during the campaign. *"After being in government for eight consecutive years and holding all the key portfolios, I had no intention of returning to politics, and certainly not to national politics... but Vladimir Putin's attack on Ukraine changed all that,"* he added.

With the election of Alexander Stubb as President of the Republic and the victory of Petteri Orpo in the general elections on 2 April 2023, the National Coalition Party (KOK) dominates the Finnish political scene.

Alexander Stubb will officially succeed Sauli Niinistö on 1 March.

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