



Bio / Lieutenant General Esa Pulkkinen

Lieutenant General Esa Pulkkinen served as Director General in the Ministry of Defence of Finland from January 2011 until February 2016. As Defence Policy Director, he was responsible for developing the Finnish defence policy: participation in international defence cooperation, basis for the Defence Forces' planning and direction of research in strategic areas. Currently he is preparing for his upcoming assignment as Director General of the EU Military Staff (EUMS).

Born in Southern Finland in 1957, Pulkkinen joined the Finnish Armed Forces in 1977. Having graduated from the Military Academy in 1980, he has served in a wide range of leadership positions. Specialist in the Common Security and Defence Policy of the European Union, Pulkkinen has also an extensive background in national defence. Among other positions, he has commanded the Sodankylä Jaeger Brigade, the northernmost army unit in the EU, and served as the Assistant Chief of Staff in the Plans and Policy Division of the Defence Command, thereby gaining practical high level military leadership experience.

In 2008-2010, Pulkkinen served as the Director of Operations in the EU Military Staff. During that time, he was responsible inter alia for planning and political-strategic level implementation of the anti-piracy operation EUNAVFOR ATALANTA. He had worked in the EUMS already in 2000-2003 as National Expert in Interim Military Staff and continued as Branch Chief (OF-5). In 2006, Pulkkinen was the obvious choice to chair the working group for Finland's EU Presidency at the Defence Policy Department.

As Director General for defence policy, Pulkkinen engaged regularly in consultations mainly in the EU capitals and the United States but also in China, Russia and other countries. He participated in almost all of the EU Defence Ministers' and Defence Policy Directors' meetings during 2011-2016. In 2013 he chaired the Policy Steering Committee of Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFECO), encompassing Finland, Denmark, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. Cooperation with NATO forms a substantive part of his dossier. Pulkkinen speaks Finnish, English, French and Swedish.

Lieutenant General Pulkkinen has a vast experience in European Union's defence policy. He particularly emphasises the key role the military community, represented by the EUMC and EUMS, plays in shaping the defence dimension of the EU. Esa Pulkkinen is very familiar on how the European Union, CFSP and CSDP structures work and he is committed to further develop them. He believes in co-operation and co-ordination within the EU and externally, in particular with UN and NATO, in the development of the comprehensive CFSP.

Pulkkinen was a post-graduate student in the Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva in 1995-1996 and studied in Harvard during 2014. He has two grown children and spouse Hanna.