

Jutta Urpilainen

Member of Parliament

The Finnish Social Democratic Party, SDP



Ms. Urpilainen is an influential and experienced Finnish politician. She has served as a Member of Parliament from the electoral district of Vaasa for 16 years (since 2003). She is a former Chairperson of SDP (2008-2014), and the first woman to lead the party. Ms. Urpilainen has worked as both the Minister of Finance (2011-2014) and the Deputy Prime Minister of Finland (2011-2014) for Mr. Jyrki Katainen's Cabinet (NCP).

Ms. Urpilainen started her political career at the municipal level. She was elected first as a Deputy Member of the City Council of Kokkola in 1996, and as a full Member in 2000. From 2015 to 2016, Ms. Urpilainen served as the Chair of the City Council Kokkola and was the first woman in that position. In addition, she has also worked as the Chair of the Regional Council of Central Ostrobothnia (2007-2008).

Ms. Urpilainen graduated with a Master of Education in 2002, and she worked as a school teacher in Helsinki and Kokkola before her election to the Finnish Parliament. She is married to Mr. Juha Mustonen, a government official who works as a diplomat in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland.

International relations and peace mediation have always been prevalent themes in the life and political agenda of Ms. Urpilainen. She participated in the Finnish Delegation to both UN and UNESCO General Assemblies. She has conducted tasks also in the Nordic Council of Ministers, and in the supervisory board and development committee of both the IMF and World Bank.

Ms. Urpilainen's political stance had previously been more in line with typical left wing-oriented social democratic practice, but as the Minister of Finance she started to adopt a more market-oriented approach to various policy issues. During her term, for instance, Ms. Urpilainen pushed for lower income tax rates, and strongly supported Greek's conditional bail-out package at the time of Euro crisis. During the years of crisis, *The Financial Times* ranked Ms. Urpilainen as the 4th most successful Minister of Finance in Europe.

Mr. Antti Rinne replaced Ms. Urpilainen as the chairperson of the party after a tight competition in 2014. The new chairmanship of Mr. Rinne also meant that Ms. Urpilainen had to give away her ministerial position. As a result of the election, a deep division emerged within the party and between the two candidates which now seems to be resolved. The current Prime Minister of Finland, Mr. Rinne decided to propose Ms. Urpilainen as the new Commissioner, regardless of the fact that MEP Mr. Eero Heinäluoma (SDP) was by far the country's most successful MEP candidate in terms of votes. Some have questioned Mr. Rinne's decision on the basis that Ms. Urpilainen did not run for a post in the EU elections. If the European Parliament approves Ms. Urpilainen, she will be the first female Commissioner of Finland.

Degrees

- Master of Education, University of Jyväskylä
- Degree Programme of Leadership, Rehtori-instituutti (now Institute of Educational Leadership)

Languages skills

- Finnish, Swedish, English, German