

Olli Kantanen

Ambassador
Director General

Ministry for Foreign
Affairs of Finland



Ambassador Olli Kantanen is the Director General for Europe in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland since August 2022.

As Director General Mr Kantanen leads the Department for Europe with overall responsibility for managing the work of the Department and the Finnish diplomatic representations in Europe. The duties of the Department include bilateral political, economic and development ties with European countries as well as coordination of the general EU matters in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the EU enlargement and Western Balkans policies and the national coordination of EU-funded institution building projects (Twinning, TAIEX). In addition, the Department is in charge of Finland's Nordic, Baltic Sea, Arctic and Antarctic cooperation and policies.

Mr Kantanen joined the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs in 1994. Prior to his current task he served as the Deputy Director General for Europe (2018-2022) and as Ambassador of Finland to Latvia (2014-2018). Mr Kantanen has worked as Director for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Deputy Director for International Financial Institutions, Deputy Director for EU Enlargement as well as Counsellor for the Under-Secretary of State. His earlier tasks include positions in the Administrative, Development Policy, Trade Policy, Europe and Russia, Eastern Europe and Central Asia Departments as well as at the EU Secretariat and postings abroad in the Embassies of Finland in Germany (1997-2001) and Estonia (2001-2004).

Mr Kantanen (born 1967) graduated from the Åbo Akademi University with a Master's degree in Political Science. He has also a diploma on European Studies from the Tilburg University in the Netherlands.

He is married with three children and enjoys outdoor sports, particularly cross-country skiing, cycling, orienteering and running.

