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Alexander Stubb is the new President of Finland

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The second round of the presidential election in Finland was held on 11 February, and all the votes were counted on the same day. The winner was Alexander Stubb, running on behalf of the centre-right National Coalition Party, which currently heads the governing coalition. He won 51.6% of the vote, while his challenger, the Green League's Pekka Haavisto, received 48.4% support. The turnout was 67.58%. Stubb will be sworn into office as early as 1 March.

Commentary

- The Finnish president is appointed for a six-year term and can serve a maximum of two terms, so the incumbent Sauli Niinistö, who held the office since 2012, could not run for a third time. Before being sworn in, the president-elect must renounce his party affiliation. The president plays a special role in the Finnish political system: in cooperation with the government, he led foreign policy and is the Supreme Commander of the Defence Forces. In consultation with the prime minister and the minister of defence, he issues decisions on the basic guidelines of Finland's military defence, on significant changes in military preparedness, and on the principles of how military defence is implemented. He is free to impose martial law by decree for up to three months, which may be extended for one year upon approval by parliament.
- The outcome of the second round of the election is not surprising and reflects the polls, in which Stubb has maintained a lead of around 5 p.p. since November 2023. Finland's policies towards Russia, Ukraine, the United States and NATO, as well as on security more generally, will not change. Both Stubb and the outgoing Niinistö come from the same party. Given the powers of the head of state, the campaign focused on foreign and security policy issues. Stubb and Haavisto competed on the experience they had gained in these areas, and did not present fundamental differences in views. Stubb, however, remained more flexible by not adopting a clear position on the remilitarisation of the Åland Islands or the inclusion of women in compulsory military service, as advocated by the Finnish left.
- Stubb was born on 24 June 1968. He has extensive foreign policy experience: he was a member of the European Parliament (2004–8) and subsequently held the portfolios of head of foreign affairs (2008–11), minister for European affairs & foreign trade (2011–14), prime minister (2014–15) and minister of finance (2015–16). From 2017 to 2020 he was vice-president of the European Investment Bank. In 2018, he unsuccessfully tried to become the European People's Party (EPP) candidate for the presidency of the European Commission. Stubb claims that the immediate reason why he returned to national politics and ran for election was the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine and

Moscow's undermining of the security system in Europe. He has also been one of the leading supporters of Finnish accession to NATO for over a decade.