

FINNLAND

Minister of Culture and Sports

Stefan Wallin

Ministry of Education
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Born on 1 June 1967 in Vaasa
Married, three children

His father was a bookseller (died in 1981) and his mother worked as a museum guide. The family spent their summers at a villa in Västervik where Wallin still spends part of his holiday every year.

He went to school at the Onkilahti elementary school, Vikinga and Vasa Övningskolan comprehensive schools and took his matriculation examination in Vasa Övningskolan upper secondary school in 1986.

In his student years, he took part both in student politics and activities of the Svensk Ungdom youth organisation of the Swedish People's Party.

He also managed to graduate in six year as Master of Social Sciences. In the spring of 1994 he compiled the thesis for his Master's degree on the theme "Sfp och Lex Kekkonen" (The Swedish People's Party and Lex Kekkonen). The thesis examined the way the Swedish People's Party in 1972-1973 first opposed and then grudgingly supported the emergency law by virtue of which President Kekkonen's term of office was continued without the usual electoral college vote.

After graduation, he soon engaged in national politics.

In the summer of 1994 he was recruited as Special Adviser to the Minister of Transport, Ole Norrback, who was then Party Leader of the Swedish People's Party. After the parliamentary election of 1995, he transferred to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs where Ole Norrback acted as the Minister for European Affairs and Foreign Trade. Three years later, in 1998, he left for the Ministry of the Interior and acted as an Adviser to Jan-Erik Enestam, the new Party Leader of the Swedish People's Party. After the parliamentary election of 1999, he was an Adviser to Mr Enestam at the Ministry of Defence for more than a year.

He stood for election in the 1999 parliamentary election in the Vaasa electoral district. He received 5 799 votes. With 370 more votes he would have been elected as Member of Parliament.

In the autumn of 2000, he decided to leave politics behind and return to journalism, a field in which he had been active back in his student days. The family had their first-born daughter that year and Wallin needed more regularity in his daily life. Åbo Underrättelser, the oldest newspaper in Finland, welcomed him as Deputy Editor-in-Chief and local reporter. He enjoyed working in this position for nearly five years during which period second daughter Freja was born.

In late winter 2005, he was offered a position as State Secretary at the Ministry of the Environment. In accepting this position, he made clear that he had now returned to politics and was totally devoted to it. In June 2006, he was elected with a clear majority of votes as the new Party Leader of the Swedish People's Party, succeeding Jan-Erik Enestam. In January 2007 he accepted the post of Minister of the Environment.

He stood as a candidate in the 2007 parliamentary election in the electoral district of Southwest Finland. He was elected to Parliament with the highest number of votes in his electoral district: 12 097 votes.

In 1995 he married Elina Pirjatanniemi, Doctor of Law. She comes from Tampere but the couple met at the Åbo Akademi University where they both studied political science and international law.

In his spare time, he is a large-scale consumer of newspapers and magazines and enjoys reading literature. He is also interested in various registers. He takes an interest in challenging cooking and going to the gym and is a fan of English premier league football. His favourite team is Aston Villa from Birmingham.