

KUSTI SALM

Permanent Secretary

Ministry of Defence of Republic of Estonia



Mr Kusti Salm assumed the office of the Permanent Secretary of the Estonian Ministry of Defence in May 2021. Previously he served as the Director General of the Estonian Centre of Defence Investment, fulfilling the tasks of Estonia's chief defence acquisition officer.

Permanent Secretary is the highest civil servant position within the Estonian Ministry of Defence. He is responsible for the management of the ministry and for co-ordinating the activities of the Estonian Defence Forces, the Estonian Foreign Intelligence Service, the Centre for Defence Investments, the Estonian Defence Resources Board and the War Museum. He also oversees the Estonian Defence League that is a voluntary national defence organisation operating in the area of government of the Estonian Ministry of Defence.

In 2017, Mr Salm was the chief negotiator and chairman of the EU working group dealing with European Defence Industrial Development Programme (EDIDP), a 500 million euro investment programme for the European Defence Industry. In NATO, Kusti Salm represented Estonia in the Conference of National Armaments Directors (CNAD). In European Defence Agency, he served as a member of the National Armament Directors Steering Board. Additionally, he is a Founding Member of the European Cyber Security Organisation's (ECISO) Board of Directors, the biggest EU investment vehicle to cyber security.

Mr Salm started his career in the Estonian MoD at 2007 as an adviser in the field of EU defence policy. In 2011-2015, he served as an Armaments Cooperation Counsellor in the Permanent Representation of Estonia to NATO. Upon his return to Estonia, he was the Director of Defence Industry and Innovation Department (2015-2016) and thereafter the Director of Defence Investments Department (2016-2019). Furthermore, he has been the initiator of two Estonian flagship defence R&D programmes – the development of NATO Cyber Range Capability and the EU level programme on the Modular Unmanned Ground Systems.

Mr Salm was born on the 17th of April 1984 in Tallinn. He has graduated from the University of Tartu and has a degree in Political Sciences. He has also studied Business Administration in the University of Maastricht. In 2014, Mr Salm completed the SERA (*Session Européenne des Responsables d'Armement*) course in France and in 2009 the High Level Course of the European Security and Defence College. In 2015, he was among the first group of graduates of the Estonian MoD's Future Leadership training programme. He has completed conscript service in Estonian Defence Forces.

Mr Salm has been awarded the IV Class Order of Merit of the White Star by the President of the Republic of Estonia, the Third Class of the Cross of Merit of the Ministry of Defence and the Estonian Defence Forces Meritorious Service Cross by the Commander of the Estonian Defence Forces.

Mr Kusti Salm is married and has two sons.