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A Finnish national, Mr Härmälä was previously President of The Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners in Finland (MTK) since 1994. He has a Masters degree in Agriculture and an impressive career in Finland within government as well as in the private sector.

Esa Härmälä was the EC accession negotiator for Agriculture and Fisheries within the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in the mid-nineties, and was based in Brussels during the mid-eighties while working as Counsellor for Agriculture and Fisheries at the Finnish Mission to the European Communities.