

Short biography of Jean-Claude Juncker

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Jean-Claude Juncker

Prime Minister of Luxembourg, Minister of State (January 1995–December 2013)

Born on 9 December 1954 in Redange-sur-Attert

Education and training

- Primary school in Redange-sur-Attert and secondary education at boarding school in Clairefontaine (Belgium)
- Secondary school diploma at the Lycée Michel Rodange in Luxembourg City (1974)
- Studies in Law at the University of Strasbourg (1979)

Positions held in government

- State Secretary for Labour and Social Security (1982–1984)
- Minister for Labour, Minister Delegate for the Budget (1984–1989)
- Minister for Finance, Minister for Labour (1989–1994)
- Minister for Finance, Minister for Labour (1994–1995)
- Prime Minister, Minister of State, Minister for Finance, Minister for Labour and Employment (1995–1999)
- Prime Minister, Minister of State and Minister for Finance (1999–2004)
- Prime Minister, Minister of State and Minister for Finance (2004–2009)
- Prime Minister, Minister of State, Minister for the Treasury (July 2009–2013)
- Minister for Religious Affairs (April–December 2013)

Political positions

- Member of the Christian Social People's Party (CSV) (since 1974)
- Parliamentary Secretary of the CSV (1979–1982)
- Elected as MP for the CSV in the Chamber of Deputies (in 1984 and in all elections held since, namely 1989, 1994, 1999, 2004, 2009 and 2014)
- Chairman of the CSV (1990–1995)

European positions

- First permanent President of the Eurogroup, which brings together the Finance Ministers of all the Member States of the euro zone (2005–2013). On 21 January 2013, he took the decision to stand down as President of the Eurogroup.

International positions

- Governor of the World Bank (1989–1995)
- Governor of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (1995–2013)
- Governor of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (ERBD) (1995–2013)

Honours

- Honorary doctorate from Miami University (1998)
- Honorary doctorate from the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Münster (2001)
- Grand Officer of the Legion of Honour (2002)
- Honorary doctorate from the University of Bucharest (2003)
- Honorary citizen of the city of Trier (2003)
- Honorary doctorate in Law from the Democritus University of Thrace (2004)
- International Charlemagne Prize of Aachen (2006)
- Foreign associate member of the Academy of Moral and Political Sciences at the Institute of France (2007)
- Honorary doctorate from the Robert Schuman University of Strasbourg (2007)
- Honorary doctorate from the University of Pittsburgh (2008)
- Honorary Senator of the European Academy of Sciences and Arts (2009)
- Honorary doctorate from Sophia University, Tokyo (2010)
- Honorary doctorate from Innsbruck Medical University (2010)
- Honorary doctorate from the School of Law at the University of Athens (2011)
- Honorary degree of Doctor of Letters from the University of Sheffield (2012)
- *Sigillum Magnum* from the University of Bologna (2012)

Jean-Claude Juncker and Europe

— In 1985, Luxembourg held the presidency of the Council of the European Communities and Jean-Claude Juncker chaired the Social Affairs Council and Budget Council. This period also marked the beginning of his firm pro-European commitment, inspired by his heartfelt belief that only European integration can guarantee lasting peace throughout Europe.

— In 1991, as President-in-Office of the Economic and Financial Affairs Council, Jean-Claude Juncker became one of the principal architects of the Treaty on European Union, in particular the section on economic and monetary union, of which he drafted large parts himself. In May of the same year, during an informal meeting of the Finance Ministers of the twelve Member States held in Luxembourg, negotiations on economic and monetary union were successfully concluded thanks to Juncker's intervention, which proposed the principle of an opt-out for the United Kingdom. In February 1992, he was one of the signatories of the Treaty on European Union.

— In June 1994, when Jean-Claude Juncker was re-elected to the Chamber, he retained his Minister for Finance and Minister for Labour portfolios. On 20 January 1995, following Prime Minister Jacques Santer's nomination as President of the European Commission by the European Council and his confirmation in this post by the European Parliament, Juncker was appointed Prime Minister and Minister of State. As head of the government, he continued to carry out the functions of Minister for Finance and Minister for Labour and Employment.

— In December 1996, Jean-Claude Juncker successfully mediated between the German Federal Chancellor, Helmut Kohl, and the French President, Jacques Chirac, on the subject of the stability pact that accompanied economic and monetary union. After this 'new compromise' that had been brought about by a Luxembourger, the international press hailed Juncker as 'the hero of Dublin'.

— Luxembourg's Presidency of the Council of the European Union during the second half of 1997 provided Jean-Claude Juncker with the opportunity to highlight his ambitions for a more social Europe. In November 1997, the Extraordinary European Council on Employment saw the creation of the 'Luxembourg Process', requiring Member States to submit an annual action plan promoting employment and to meet quantified and verifiable criteria in the context of job creation and the fight against unemployment.

— In December 1997, at the Luxembourg European Council, the European Union opened its doors to enlargement to the East.

— The same summit witnessed the creation of Euro 11, the informal group of Finance Ministers of the members of Economic and Monetary Union, since renamed the ‘Eurogroup’. The first meeting of the Eurogroup took place in June 1998 at the Château de Senningen in Luxembourg. Jean-Claude Juncker was chosen to be the first President of the Eurogroup (from 1 January 2005 until 31 December 2006). At the Eurogroup meeting on 8 September 2006 in Helsinki, he was reappointed President for a two-year term of office (due to expire on 31 December 2008, but extended until 31 December 2009). Later, following the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon on 1 December 2009, he was elected President of the Eurogroup for a two-and-a-half-year term of office.

— During the first six months of 2005, Luxembourg’s Presidency of the Council of the European Union allowed Jean-Claude Juncker to secure an agreement at the March 2005 European Council on a reform of the Stability and Growth Pact, an agreement that did not affect the pact’s fundamental principles. During this summit, Juncker also succeeded in reviving the Lisbon Strategy, in a bid to reaffirm its social and environmental dimensions.

— As President of the Council in 2005, Jean-Claude Juncker was confronted with the challenge posed by non-ratification of the draft European Constitution by France and the Netherlands. The European budget was the source of recurring tensions between the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, and Jean-Claude Juncker.

— On 27 June 2014, Jean-Claude Juncker (the candidate of the centre-right European People’s Party, which won the most seats in the European elections) was chosen by the Heads of State or Government of the EU Member States to be the next President of the Commission.

— On 15 July 2014, the European Parliament confirmed this choice, with 422 votes in favour out of 751. In November 2014, Jean-Claude Juncker will replace current José Manuel Barroso from Portugal as President of the Commission. Jean-Claude Juncker is the third Luxembourger to become President of the Commission, after Gaston Thorn (1981–1985) and Jacques Santer (1995–1999).

Jean-Claude Juncker and Pierre Werner

— Pierre Werner noticed Jean-Claude Juncker (then no more than a party activist) during the period when the CSV was in opposition (1974–1979) and Pierre Werner was an MP and leader of the CSV parliamentary group in the Chamber of Deputies.

— In 1982 Pierre Werner, then Prime Minister, appointed the young Jean-Claude Juncker State Secretary for Labour and Social Security, two positions corresponding to his preferred political policy areas. Pierre Werner noted in his memoirs: ‘At the risk of displeasing some who were older, I proposed Jean-Claude Juncker to the Grand-Duke, after consulting Spautz and Santer and following a positive vote in the National Council. Juncker was then 28 years old. His appointment was well in line with the policy of rejuvenating the political ranks.’¹

From then on, the two men, who shared the same political and moral values, remained very close: Werner became both mentor and inspiration for Juncker in his domestic and European activities. Later, Juncker was to occupy the same positions as Werner: Prime Minister, Minister for Finance, Minister for the Treasury and Minister for the Budget, and he became one of the figures most committed to European integration over the last 15 years.

¹ Pierre Werner, *Itinéraires luxembourgeois et européens. Évolutions et Souvenirs: 1945–1985*, 2 volumes, Éditions Saint-Paul, Luxembourg, 1992, Vol. 1, p. 245

— The day before the changeover to euro notes and coins, Juncker — speaking from the platform of the EU Council of Ministers in Brussels on 31 December 1998 — addressed a personal message of recognition and gratitude to Pierre Werner in Luxembourgish.

— In 2002, after the death of Pierre Werner, the European University Institute in Florence created the ‘Pierre Werner Chair’, an integral part of the EUI’s Robert Schuman Centre, with the aim of encouraging academic research in the field of European Monetary Union and economic governance within the Union.

— On 26 June 2006, in the presence of HRH Grand Duke Henri, Jean-Claude Juncker gave an address on the European achievements of Pierre Werner at the European University Institute in Florence as part of the Pierre Werner Chair activities. The Luxembourg delegation also included members of the Werner family.

Jean-Claude Juncker and the ‘Pierre Werner and Europe’ research project

— The ‘Pierre Werner and Europe’ research project was launched on 27 January 2011 during an academic event organised by the CVCE and the Pierre Werner Foundation under the aegis of the National Research Fund, at which Jean-Claude Juncker gave a [lecture](#) entitled ‘From the Werner Plan to the euro: 40 years of success and crisis’. The [proceedings](#) of the conference were published in June 2011.

— On 27 January 2011, Jean-Claude Juncker granted the CVCE an exclusive [interview](#) in connection with the ‘Pierre Werner and Europe’ research project.

— Jean-Claude Juncker is the Chairman of the ‘Pierre Werner and Europe’ project [Patronage Committee](#), composed of 30 eminent European figures.

— The research corpus on the Werner Report was presented on 6 March 2013 at a public [event](#) organised by the CVCE in cooperation with the Pierre Werner Foundation and the European Merit Foundation, entitled ‘**EMU at the crossroads. The relevance of Pierre Werner’s thinking in the 21st century**’. At this event, Jean-Claude Trichet, Honorary Governor of the Banque de France and former President of the European Central Bank, and Jean-Claude Juncker presented their views on the ongoing financial crisis and sketched out possible scenarios for the development of Economic and Monetary Union. The [proceedings](#) of the event were published in June 2013.