

## Curriculum Vitae - Hans-Gert Poettering



**Hans-Gert Poettering** was born on 15 September 1945 in Bersenbrueck (Niedersachsen, Germany). He never knew his father, who died in the final days of World War Two. This personal fate was instrumental in shaping his political involvement and his path in European politics. Hans-Gert Poettering has two sons, Johannes and Benedict.

He is one of six MEPs to have served continuously in the European Parliament since the first direct elections in 1979.

### Education and Studies

- Abitur, 1966
- National service, reserve officer, 1966-1968
- Studied law, politics and history at the universities of Bonn and Geneva, as well as at the Institut des Hautes Études Internationales in Geneva (1968-1973)
- Study visit to Columbia University in New York (1971)
- Passed his first state law examination in 1973
- Obtained his doctorate in 1974
- Passed his second state law examination in 1976

### Professional History

- Research Assistant: 1976-1979
- Appointed lecturer at the University of Osnabrueck in 1989
- Appointed honorary professor in 1995

### Political History

- Member of the European Parliament for the Osnabrueck, Emsland, Ostfriesland region since 1979
- Chairman of the European Parliament Subcommittee on Security and Defence, 1984-1994
- Vice-Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, 1994-1999
- Leader of the EPP Working Group '1996 Intergovernmental Conference', the proposals of which were the basis for the EPP's position on the Treaty of Amsterdam, 1994-1996
- Leader of the EPP 'EU Enlargement' Working Group, 1996-1999
- Chairman of the Europa-Union Deutschland, 1997-1999
- Chairman of the EPP-ED Group in the European Parliament (re-elected after the European elections of July 2004), Vice-Chairman of the European Peoples' Party

(PPE), Member of the Executive Committee and Federal Executive of the CDU in Germany, 1999-2007

- Chairman of the Osnabrueck district CDU since 1990

### **Main areas of political activity**

- **The enlargement of the European Union towards the countries of Central Europe**

He worked in the EPP and EPP Group's Working Group on European Union enlargement (1996-1999) and after being elected as group Chairman, he was an indefatigable advocate of the fledgling democracies of Central Europe and of their accession to the European Union.

In particular, the EPP-ED Group, under his leadership, championed the cause for the 2004 European elections to become the target date for the accession of the candidate countries, so as to encourage these countries to quickly implement the difficult reforms necessary. On 1 May 2004, all eight Central European countries, as well as Cyprus and Malta, became members of the European Union.

- **Institutional development and strengthening the rights of the European Parliament**

He has continually championed the cause of consolidating the structures of the European Union and their capacities.

Under his leadership, the EPP and EPP Group Working Group '1996 Intergovernmental Conference' (1994-1996) drew up political guidelines for institutional reform, in particular on the equality of the European Parliament with the Council of Ministers in terms of legislation, the budget procedure and scrutiny of the Commission as European executive. These proposals formed the basis of the EPP's position on the Treaty of Amsterdam, in which the European Parliament was granted extensive new decision-making rights.

After the disappointing result of the Treaty of Nice in 2000, he championed, in his role of leader of the EPP-ED Group, the cause of the immediate continuation of the reform process. On the group's initiative, the proposal was made at the EPP Congress (Berlin, January 2001) to move forward with the reform process, but in the form of a convention (as with the work on the Charter of Fundamental Rights), rather than an intergovernmental conference, with the participation of the European Parliament, the Commission as well as national governments and parliaments.

### ***Appointment of the Prodi Commission***

When the Prodi Commission was appointed in 1999, he supported the cause that important assurances should be made to the Parliament of increased transparency and accountability. At the same time the Group, even though it emerged from the elections as the largest political force, supported a Commission President who did not come from their political grouping. Hans-Gert Poettering expressed his opinion at this time that in the future, the

Commission President should come from the family of parties which won the elections, as was written into the EU constitution.

### ***Appointment of the Barroso Commission***

This political goal came to fruition with the appointment of José Manuel Barroso as the Commission President after the 2004 European elections. Applying the provisions of the new constitution, he successfully, as leader of the whole EPP-ED Group, advocated that a candidate should be named from the political grouping which had won the elections. This meant that another candidate could be appointed instead of the candidate already decided upon before the elections by some heads of state and government. On 22 July, the European Parliament elected Barroso President of the European Commission by a large majority.

### **Political principles and convictions**

His political conviction is shaped by a Christian conception of man, as taught in Catholic social teachings. Solidarity and subsidiarity figure amongst his most important principles in European politics. His fundamental political conviction is that the goal and principle of all political activity should be the dignity of every single human being.

As a result of this, his highest political priority is first and foremost the constant protection of human rights everywhere and their implementation without compromise. Time and time again he has put human rights at the centre of the debate, for example in Chechnya and Russia, China, Guantanamo and Indonesia and on the topic of migration.

On the basis of the decision of the EPP-ED Group, which he initiated, he also supported the consideration of references to God and the acknowledgement of the Judaeo-Christian heritage in the constitution.

### **Awards**

- Winner of the Konsul-Penseler prize of the Artland-Gymnasium in Quakenbrück
- Robert Schuman Medal of the EPP-Group
- Grand Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany
- Grand Decoration of the Republic of Austria
- European Honorary Senator
- Gold medal of 'Mérite Européen', Luxembourg
- MEP of the Year for 2004: award by European Voice
- Doctor Honoris Causa of Babeş-Bolyai-University in Cluj-Napoca, Romania

## **Publications**

- Adenauers Sicherheitspolitik 1955-1963. Ein Beitrag zum deutsch-amerikanischen Verhältnis, Düsseldorf 1975
- Die vergessenen Regionen: Plädoyer für eine solidarische Regionalpolitik in der Europäischen Gemeinschaft (Hans-Gert Pöttering und Frank Wiehler), 1983
- Europas vereinigte Staaten - Annäherungen an Werte und Ziele, 1993 (Ludger Kühnhardt und Hans-Gert Pöttering)
- Kontinent Europa: Kern, Übergänge, Grenzen, Osnabrück 1998 (Ludger Kühnhardt und Hans-Gert Pöttering)
- Weltpartner Europäische Union, 2001 (Ludger Kühnhardt, Hans-Gert Pöttering)
- Von der Vision zur Wirklichkeit. Auf dem Weg zur Einigung Europas, Bonn 2004

## **Private life and hobbies**

Both of his sons, Johannes (29) and Benedict (23) have already taken up positions of responsibility in the CDU: Johannes is the Federal Vice-Chairman of the German Junge Union, Benedict is the District Chairman of the Junge Union in Osnabrueck and Treasurer of the Junge Union in Niedersachsen.

In what little free time he has left, he reads for pleasure, in particular biographies, historical novels and crime novels. He enjoys walking and has gone skiing for many years in Zermatt with his sons.