



Günter Verheugen

Former European Commissioner, European enlargement

As a former politician and an individual with strong opinions regarding a number of issues of importance to the EU, Günter Verheugen can educate and challenge his audience.

Günter's biography

Günter Verheugen's Background

A former European Commissioner, Verheugen was open in his desire to cut red-tape, to improve policies and to improve the stability and security of the European Union.

- Former Vice-President of the European Commission
- Former European Commissioner for Enlargement (1999-2004)
- Former European Commissioner for Enterprise and Industry (2004-2010)

Verheugen was born on the 28th of April 1944 in Bad Kreuznach, in Rhineland-Palatinate, Germany. As a young adult, he spent two years in Neue Rhein-Neue Ruhr-Zeitung, a regional newspaper, as a trainee. He then studied sociology, history, and [political](#) science at the Universities of Cologne and Bonn.

After graduating in 1969, Verheugen began working at the Federal Ministry of the Interior as Head of the Public Relations Divisions. He remained in this role until 1974, when he became a Head of an Analysis and Information Task Force for the Federal Foreign Office. His experience in these roles was invaluable and in 1977 he joined the Free Democratic Party (FDP) as Federal Party Manager. Just a year later, Verheugen became the FDP's General Secretary, a position he remained in until 1982.

In 1982, Verheugen joined the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD), he became a member of the German Bundestag (parliament) in 1983, where he served predominantly as a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee.

During the time he was a member of the Bundestag (until 1999) he was also a spokesman for the SPD

National Executive (1986-1987) and editor in chief for the party's newspaper (1987-1989). Between 1990 and 1999, Verheugen was Chairman of Deutsche Welles Radio Broadcasting Council. In the 1990s he was also a Chairman of the Bundestags European Union Special Committee for a year. He resumed his post as Federal Party Manager at the SPD between 1993 and 1995, becoming Deputy Chairman again between 1994 and 1997. These three years also saw Verheugen become a Member of the Foreign Affairs Committee. Verheugen became a member of the SPD National Executive in 1997. In 1998, he was appointed the Federal Foreign Offices Minister of State and in 1999 he became a member of the European Commission, examining the enlargement and expansion of the European Union. He later became Commissioner for Enterprise and Industry, a key member of the Barroso Commission. He was then promoted and became a vice president of the commission. Verheugen retired in February 2010 and has since become an Honorary Professor at Frankfurt's Viadrana European University.

Günter's talks

- **Europe now and tomorrow**
- **The New Member States**
- **Peace, Security and Disarmament**

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