

Biography of Marcelino Oreja Aguirre

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Biography of Marcelino Oreja Aguirre

Marcelino Oreja Aguirre was born in Madrid on 13 February 1935. He was awarded a PhD in Law from the University of Madrid with distinction and special commendation for his thesis *España ante la revisión del concepto clásico de aguas jurisdiccionales*. He began his career in 1960, heading the list of entrants to the Spanish diplomatic service. His first post was in the Ministerial Cabinet at the Spanish Foreign Ministry.

From 1976 to 1980 he served as Minister for Foreign Affairs in the government led by the Union of the Democratic Centre (*Unión de Centro Democrático* — UCD), and from 1977 to 1978 as Senator by royal appointment in the Constituent Assembly. In the 1979 general elections, he was elected Member of Parliament for Guipúzcoa as head of the UCD list. He was elected MP for Álava in 1982. In 1980, he was appointed Government Delegate to the Basque Country.

In 1984, the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly appointed him Secretary General of the Council of Europe by an absolute majority in the first round of voting. Four years later, the European Foundation for Science, Art and Culture selected him as 'European of the Year' during a ceremony held at the French Senate.

In 1989, as Member of the European Parliament and Chairman of the European Parliament's Committee on Institutional Affairs, the political groups in the European Parliament gave him the task of preparing a preliminary draft of a European Constitution, which he would submit to Parliament in June 1993.

Marcelino Oreja Aguirre was again elected MP for Álava in the 1993 general elections, this time as a member of the People's Party (*Partido Popular* — PP), and he was also appointed Chairman of the Joint Congress-Senate Committee for European Affairs in the Spanish Parliament.

In 1994, Marcelino Oreja was appointed Member of the European Commission with special responsibility for Transport and Energy. Following the establishment of the College of Commissioners in 1995, he was given the portfolio of Culture, Audiovisual Policy and Institutional Relations. In 1996 he also served as European Commission Representative at the Intergovernmental Conference for the revision of the Maastricht Treaty.

Once he had completed his term at the European Commission, he returned to Spain, where he was appointed Head of the Institute for European Studies at the CEU San Pablo University Foundation, Vice-Chairman of the BBV Foundation (1996) and Doctor Honoris Causa at the Universities of Zaragoza and Seville (1996).

In the private sector, he served as President of the FCC and Advisor for Acerinox and for Repsol, from 21 December 1999 to 2008. He is currently Advisor for FCC and Barclays Bank.

In the academic world, Marcelino Oreja serves as patron of the CEU San Pablo University Foundation, the Gregorio Marañón Foundation and the European Academy of Yuste. He has also been a member of the European Academy of Sciences and Arts since 1992, and was Professor and holder of the Jean Monnet Chair in European Institutions at the Complutense University of Madrid (1993).

Since 1980, he has been a member of the diplomatic service, serving as Spanish Ambassador. In 2001, he joined the Royal Academy of Moral and Political Sciences, serving as its Vice-President, Secretary and currently as its President.