


Short biography of Jacques Santer

Copyright: (c) CVCE.EU by UNI.LU
All rights of reproduction, of public communication, of adaptation, of distribution or of dissemination via Internet, internal network or any other means are strictly reserved in all countries.
Consult the legal notice and the terms and conditions of use regarding this site.

URL: http://www.cvce.eu/obj/short_biography_of_jacques_santer-en-b837e5e1-5034-4ea9-b256-d8d4d7063f26.html

Last updated: 07/07/2016



Jacques Santer

Born on 18 May 1937 in Wasserbillig, Luxembourg

Education and training

- PhD in Law
- Studies at the Paris Institute of Political Studies

Offices held in government and at national level

- State Secretary for Employment and Social Affairs (1972–1974)
- State Secretary in the Ministry of State, Department of Cultural Affairs (1972–1974)
- Member of the Luxembourg Chamber of Deputies (1974–1979)
- Minister for Finance, Employment and Social Security (1979–1984); Minister for Cultural Affairs (1989–1995)
- President of the Government, Prime Minister, Minister of State, Minister for Finance and the Treasury (1984–1995)

Positions held in the Luxembourg Christian Social People's Party (CSV)

- Secretary-General of the CSV (1972–1974)
- Chairman of the CSV (1974–1982)

Positions and offices held at European level

- Vice-President of the European Parliament (1975–1977)
- Member of the European Parliament (1975–1979)
- Vice-Chairman of the European People's Party (EPP) (1987–1990)
- President of the European Commission (1995–1999)
- Member of the European Parliament (1999–2004)

Activities

- Head of the Luxembourg delegation to the European People's Party (EPP)
- Full member of the European Parliament Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defence Policy
- Alternate member of the European Parliament Committee on Industry, External Trade, Research and Energy
- Member of the delegation for relations with the countries of South Asia and the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)

Jacques Santer, Pierre Werner and Europe

— Pierre Werner met Jacques Santer in the course of the CSV's internal activities. The two men share a similar background in terms of their university studies and their political and public duties; for example, Jacques Santer succeeded Pierre Werner, several years later, as head of the Luxembourg Association of Catholic University Students.

— It was Pierre Werner who first appointed Jacques Santer to the government as State Secretary in the Ministry of Employment and Social Security. Pierre Werner also

appointed him as Minister with responsibility for Cultural Affairs, a portfolio held by Werner. In his memoirs,¹ Pierre Werner refers to him as ‘Jacques Santer ... whose expertise and political flair I had long appreciated’.

— When the CSV entered the opposition (1974–1979), Jacques Santer was party chairman and Pierre Werner leader of the political group in the Chamber of Deputies; the two men therefore enjoyed regular contact and developed a close working relationship.

— In his final government (1979–1984), Pierre Werner again turned to Jacques Santer, this time appointing him Minister for Finance, Employment and Social Security. Jacques Santer describes how he regularly consulted Pierre Werner on questions of finance — a ministerial portfolio held by Werner for many years — and also on a wide range of other matters.

— In 1984, the ‘brilliant personal achievement and unifying personality’² of Jacques Santer propelled him to the post of Prime Minister, where he succeeded Pierre Werner (who left the political arena). As leader of the Luxembourg Government, Santer also served as Minister for Finance and Minister for the Treasury, following on from the tradition established by Werner and subsequently upheld by Jean-Claude Juncker.

— The Luxembourg Presidency of the Council in the second half of 1985 was dominated by the completion of the work of the Intergovernmental Conference for the revision of the Rome Treaties, in anticipation of the establishment of a single market and closer cooperation in the field of foreign and security policy. At the European Council of 2 and 3 December 1985, Jacques Santer succeeded in securing an agreement on institutional reform, particularly regarding the extension of qualified majority voting and the strengthening of the European Parliament’s powers.

— In the first half of 1991, Luxembourg again took on the rotating Presidency of the Council, which was this time dominated by the Gulf War and the civil war in Yugoslavia. With regard to internal European Community matters, the Luxembourg Presidency was called on to lead the first part of the conference on economic and monetary union and political union, held in Rome in December 1990. At the European Council of 28 and 29 June 1990, which mainly focused on these questions, the President-in-Office, Jacques Santer, submitted a draft treaty to his colleagues that would serve as a working basis for the Netherlands Presidency and would lead to the Maastricht Treaty.

— In the book describing his term as President of the European Commission,³ Jacques Santer emphasises that when Helmut Kohl informed him that France and Germany were in favour of a Luxembourg — Santer himself, as it happens — becoming President of the European Commission, he notified Grand-Duke Jean and ‘sought the advice of Pierre Werner that very evening’.

— In 1998, Pierre Werner and Jacques Santer received the Prince of Asturias Awards (Spain), which they were ‘awarded jointly for their outstanding commitment to Europe’.

— On 28 December 1998 (the day before Pierre Werner’s birthday), Jacques Santer, then President of the European Commission, organised a ceremony at the Luxembourg-based Office of Official Publications of the European Communities to present Pierre

¹ Pierre Werner, *Itinéraires luxembourgeois et européens. Évolutions et souvenirs: 1945–1985*, 2 volumes, Éditions Saint Paul, Luxembourg, 1992, Vol. 1, p. 261

² Pierre Werner, *Itinéraires luxembourgeois et européens. Évolutions et souvenirs: 1945–1985*, 2 volumes, Éditions Saint Paul, Luxembourg, 1992, Vol. 2, p. 330

³ Jean-Claude Gégot, *La Commission européenne. La présidence de Jacques Santer 1995–1999*, Marks’Cons., Luxembourg, 2002, 212 pp.

Werner with the first copy of the Official Journal containing the regulations for the launch of the euro on 1 January 1999.