

## George Cunningham – Bio – August 2021

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George Cunningham retired from the European External Action Service in July 2021 as its **Strategic Adviser on Asia-Pacific Affairs**. He is responsible for the EU's recent **Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific**. He was the **EU Alternate Senior Official for the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM)** and the EU Governor of the **Asia-Europe Foundation**.



He was previously **EU Deputy Ambassador to Afghanistan** (2016-18); **EEAS Deputy Head of Division for China, Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan and Mongolia** (2012-16); Chargé d'Affaires a.i. of the EU's Delegation to **New Zealand** (2007-12); and **Coordinator for EU-US bilateral trade relations** at the EC's Trade Directorate General (2005-07). He was also Head of Accession Process and Cooperation at the EC's Delegation to **Cyprus** (2003-05) and Head of Press/Public Affairs and Political Counsellor at the EC's Delegation to the **United Nations in New York** (2000-03).

He has worked for thirty years for the EU across **all the main foreign policy files**, especially **foreign and security policy, development, public diplomacy and trade**. He has particular interest in **promoting social justice, fighting corruption and security sector reform**.

Before joining the European Commission, George Cunningham served as a **United Nations official** in New York (1987-1990) and was also an advisor on European integration to the **Polish Council of Ministers** in Warsaw (1992). At the start of his busy and varied career, he served as an officer in the **British Army**, and worked in marketing for **British Petroleum** and **British Telecom**. He founded and ran a non-governmental organisation **PACE International Affairs**. He is a graduate from **Oxford University** (MA Oxon Modern History).

During his youth, he undertook a **major expedition in Africa**, with the backing of African Presidents, walking 9,000 kilometres on foot from Alexandria in Egypt to Cape Town in South Africa over a period of 27 months (1979-81).

George is also **Chair of Lib Dems Overseas** (2018-2021), having been Chair (2016) and Vice-Chair (2014-15, 2017) of **Brussels and Europe Lib Dems**. He became **Chair of the newly-formed party's subcommittee on China**. He has attended Liberal International and ALDE Congresses as a member of the Council as part of the UK Lib Dems Delegations since 2017. **He stood as a Lib Dem candidate for parliament in the 2015 UK General Election**.

He is a member of Chatham House in London. His book - **Journey to Become a Diplomat** - was published in 2005 by the Foreign Policy Association of New York. He has enjoyed encouraging youth to get involved in international affairs by **lecturing at universities** and spoken numerous times at the **European Parliament** in his professional capacity. He also trained **Gulf Cooperation Council Diplomats** in Riyadh on behalf of the College of Europe. He is currently undertaking **many webinars on Afghanistan, China and the Indo-Pacific**.

George Cunningham was born in 1956, and has dual British-Polish nationality. He is married with two grown-up children.