

George Cunningham – Bio – July 2019

George Cunningham is the **Strategic Adviser on Asia-Pacific** Affairs at the European External Action Service (EEAS) in Brussels, having just returned from Kabul where he had been **Deputy EU Ambassador to Afghanistan** (2016-18).

He was previously **EEAS Deputy Head of Division for China, Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan and Mongolia** (2012-16); Chargé d'Affaires a.i. of the European Union's Delegation to **New Zealand** (2007-12); Coordinator for bilateral trade relations with the **United States** at the European Commission's Directorate General for Trade (2005-07); Head of the Accession Process and Cooperation Section at the European Commission's Delegation in Nicosia (2003-05) when **Cyprus** joined the EU; and Head of Press and Public Affairs and Political Counsellor at the EC's Delegation to the **United Nations** in New York (2000-03) during 9/11.



He has been working 25 years for the EU across **all the main files**, especially **foreign and security policy, 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 a 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**, educating young people in the UK about international relations. 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).

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. In 2019, he also trained **Gulf Cooperation Council Diplomats** in Riyadh in his private capacity.

In his political life, he is Chair of **Liberal Democrats** Overseas, having been Chair (2016) and Vice-Chair (2015, 2017) of Brussels and Europe Lib Dems. He stood for parliament in the 2015 UK General Election and ran the Lib Dem campaign for Brits abroad to vote in the UK EU referendum. He was a foreign policy advisor to Jo Swinson when she was Deputy Lib Dem Leader.

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