

Markus Meckel

Former foreign minister, pastor on leave

Education

Born on 18 August 1952 in Müncheberg, Brandenburg. From 1959 to 1967 attended general secondary school and from 1967 to 1969 academic high school, was forced to leave school for political reasons. From 1969 to 1971 attended Potsdam Hermannswerder Church College, obtained higher education entrance qualification. From 1971 to 1978 studied theology in Naumburg and Berlin.

From 1980 to 1988 trainee minister and pastor in Vipperow/Müritz, Mecklenburg. From 1988 to 1990 head of the ecumenical education centre in Niederndodeleben near Madgeburg; from 1988 to 1989 delegate to the Ecumenical Assembly in the GDR and the European Ecumenical Assembly in Basel, Switzerland.

Opposition in the GDR

Political work in the opposition since the 1970s, involved in numerous initiatives and in efforts to link political groups; together with Martin Gutzeit initiated the founding of the Social Democratic Party in the GDR (SDP); represented the SDP at the Central Round Table; second spokesman for the SDP since it was founded on 7 October 1989; from February to September 1990 deputy chairman, from April to June 1990 acting chairman of the SPD East. Member of the People's Chamber of the GDR from 18 March to 2 October 1990, from April to August 1990 Foreign Minister of the GDR.

Member of the German Bundestag

Member of the German Bundestag from December 1990 to October 2009; member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs; substitute member of the Committee on Cultural and Media Affairs; substitute member of the Committee on the Affairs of the European Union; chairman of the German-Polish Parliamentary Friendship Group from 1994 to 2009; deputy spokesman on foreign policy for the SPD parliamentary group in the Bundestag from June 2001 to October 2009.

Since 1991 member and from 1998 to 2006 head of the German delegation to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly; deputy head of the German delegation from 2006 to 2009; from November 2000 to November 2002 Vice-President of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly; chairman of the Political Committee of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly from 2004 to 2008.

From 1992 to 1994 spokesman for the SPD parliamentary group on the Study Commission he had proposed on the history and consequences of the SED dictatorship in Germany; spokesman for the SPD parliamentary group on the Study Commission on Overcoming the Consequences of the SED Dictatorship in the Process of German Unity from 1994 to 1998.

Outside positions and memberships

- Chairman of the board of the Foundation for the Study of the SED Dictatorship
- Co-chairman of the board of the Foundation for German-Polish Cooperation (SdpZ)
- Chairman of the discussion group on Poland of the SdpZ and the German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP)

- Member of the board of Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (German Institute for International and Security Affairs)
- Member of the board of trustees of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES)
- Member of the Board of Directors of the foundation European Partnership for Democracy (EPD), Brussels
- Member of the International Board of the International Centre for Democratic Transition (ICDT), Budapest
- Member of the German-Moldovan Forum
- Chairman of the Federal Association of the German-Polish Society from 1996 to 2000
- Member of the Mining, Chemical and Energy Industrial Union (IG BCE)

Awards

- Officer's Cross of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany (1995)
- Officer's Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland (1998)
- Order of the Lithuanian Grand Duke Gediminas (2002)
- Viadrina prize in recognition of achievements in the field of German-Polish understanding (2003)
- Order of the Cross of Terra Mariana of the Republic of Estonia (2nd Class) (2004)
- Three-Star Order of the Republic of Latvia, for outstanding achievements to support Latvia's membership in NATO and the EU (2005)
- Medal of the Defence Minister of the Republic of Latvia "in recognition of achievements in supporting Latvia's membership of NATO" (2007)
- Medal of Honour of the Bulgarian Parliament (2007)
- Lithuanian Millennium Star medal (2008)