

Biography of the President of the European Parliament



Jerzy Buzek was born on July 3rd, 1940 in Śmiłowice, a town in south-eastern Silesia which is now in the Czech Republic.

President of the European Parliament

Jerzy Buzek was elected the President of the European Parliament on July 14th, 2009, having won the largest majority of any EP President since the first direct elections in 1979. He is the first President to hail from one of the EU's new Member States.

In his inaugural address, Mr. Buzek set out the priorities for his term of office: promoting the idea of a European energy community, promoting democracy and defending human rights, strengthening cooperation with the EU's southern and eastern neighbours, enhancing the EU's role in a multipolar world, ensuring that the EU's multiannual budget can meet the needs and fulfil the ambitions of the enlarged Union, and ensuring the European Parliament is ready to play a greater role after the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty.

In carrying out his duties, the President is in constant contact with the President of the European Commission, the President of the European Council and the country holding the EU Presidency. He also represents the European Parliament during visits abroad. His day-to-day duties include organising Parliament's business and chairing plenary debates. He aims to make the European Parliament a forum for interesting, lively political debate and to bring Parliament closer to the people.

He will be in office for two and a half years.

Best Polish MEP

In 2004, Jerzy Buzek was elected to the European Parliament by the largest majority in Poland.

Once in Brussels, he threw himself into his work. He became Vice-President of the European Energy Forum. He represented the European Parliament during the elections in Ukraine, supporting the Orange Revolution. He was the European Parliament's rapporteur for the Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Development 2007-2013 legislative package, and for the European Strategic Energy Technology Plan. Between 2004 and 2009 he was a member of the European Parliament's Committee on Industry, Research and Energy and its Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety. He was also a member of the European Parliament's Delegation to the EU-Ukraine Parliamentary Cooperation Committee and its Delegation for relations with the countries of Southeast Asia and ASEAN.

His commitment and skills have been recognised on many occasions. He was named 'MEP of the Year 2006' in the research and technology category - a title awarded by The Parliament Magazine published in Brussels. He was also awarded the Polish engineers' Biały Węgiel award in 2006.

He was 'Best Polish MEP' in 2008, according to the rankings compiled by Wprost magazine and the Rzeczpospolita newspaper.

In the last European Parliament elections he won almost 400 000 votes in Silesia, thus recording the best election result in Poland for the second time in succession.

Polish Prime Minister

In February 1997 Mr. Buzek became coordinator of the panel of economics experts within the Solidarity Electoral Action (AWS) party. The AWS party manifesto drawn up at that time was a key element in the party's winning campaign in the elections to the Sejm. Jerzy Buzek was elected to the Sejm in what was its third parliamentary term, following which the AWS nominated him for the office of Prime Minister.

Jerzy Buzek's government was sworn in on 31 October. He continued in the office of Prime Minister until the end of the parliamentary term on 19 October 2001, during which time he took Poland into NATO and negotiated the terms of Poland's accession to the European Union.

Jerzy Buzek's coalition government undertook one of the most ambitious reform programmes in Poland since 1989, initiating and carrying through reforms in the local government, pensions, healthcare, education and mining sectors.

As Polish Prime Minister he also set up the government's Strategic Programme for Oświęcim, the main aim of which is to turn Oświęcim into an international centre for human rights education. He is still involved in this initiative. He helped set up the Oświęcim Academy, which, together with the Jagiellonian University, is putting together an educational programme centred around the Paweł Włodkowic School of Culture and Human Rights.

In 1998, alongside the Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, he took part in the March of the Living from Auschwitz to the gates of Birkenau. He was the first Polish Prime Minister to do so, thus providing a boost to the development of this extremely important initiative.

In January 1999 he became President of the AWS Social Movement. When the AWS lost the parliamentary elections in the autumn of 2001, Jerzy Buzek withdrew from active politics for a number of years.

Scientist

Jerzy Buzek attended the Juliusz Słowacki secondary school in Chorzów. After passing his school-leaving exams in 1957, he went on to study in the mechanical and energy engineering department at the Silesian University of Technology in Gliwice, graduating in 1963. He then started work at the Institute of Chemical Engineering in the Polish Academy of Sciences in Gliwice. He defended his doctoral thesis in 1969. Jerzy Buzek continued his scientific work throughout the 1970s. He spent 1971 on a research placement at the University of Cambridge. During the following decade he began research in the field of environmental protection. He was a highly regarded lecturer at the Silesian University of Technology in Gliwice, and later at the Opole University of Technology.

Jerzy Buzek's achievements in scientific research and in teaching were recognised when he was appointed Professor of Engineering.

Solidarność activist

In 1980, Jerzy Buzek became a member of Solidarność and was appointed Chair of the Works Committee. In 1981, he became a delegate to the First National Congress of Delegates of Solidarność, and he later chaired the fourth, fifth and sixth National Congresses. Having avoided internment on 13 December 1981, he continued his political activities in the underground movement. He published 'S', an illegal underground pamphlet, the first issue of which appeared in January 1982. He suspended his activities in 1987 as his daughter, Agata, was seriously ill.

Following Solidarność's triumph in 1989, he became a full-time academic.

Community activist and educationalist

At the end of the 1990s, Jerzy Buzek established the annual Pro Publico Bono prize for the best civic initiatives in Poland. Between 2002 and 2004, he was vice-rector of the science faculty at Polonia University in Częstochowa. He also founded the Polonia School of Diplomacy and the Family Foundation.