

MICHEL BARNIER



European Commission's Head of Task Force for Relations with the United Kingdom (2019-2021)
French Minister of Foreign Affairs (2004-2005)

Michel Barnier became known internationally as France's man for Europe. The former French foreign minister and high-profile specialist on Europe led the Brexit negotiations as the European Union's chief negotiator.

Michel Barnier (*1951) graduated from the ESCP Europ business school. After becoming involved in the youth organisation of the Gaullist UDR at a young age, he quickly made a political career after his studies. He initially worked on the staff of various ministers before becoming a member of the General Council in the Département of Savoie in 1973. In 1978, he entered the French National Assembly as the youngest deputy for the neo-Gaullist RPR. In the years that followed, he held various positions, including Minister of the Environment, Minister of Europe and Minister of Foreign Affairs. Until 2009, he was Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries. Besides Michel Barnier was Executive Co-Chairman (together with Jean-Claude Killy) of the Sixth Winter Olympic Games taking place in Albertville in 1992.

Barnier also made a name for himself in European politics. In 1999, he became a member of the European Commission and took over the portfolio for regional policy and institutional reforms. He then became a special advisor to EU Commission President José Manuel Barroso and was elected to the European Parliament in 2007. There he took over the office of Commissioner for Internal Market and Services in the Barroso II Commission. He thus held a key portfolio during the European financial and economic crisis, which included responsibilities for the supervision of financial service providers and the removal of market barriers. As from 2014, he was also Vice-President of the Commission.

After his mandate ended, Barnier was appointed Special Advisor to the EU Commission on European Defence and Security Policy by Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker. Barnier performed this task on an honorary basis before becoming the EU Commission's chief negotiator for Brexit in July 2016. The convinced European lead one of the biggest negotiations in the history of the EU until March 2021. "Monsieur Brexit" convinced above all with his patience and the fact that he never despaired of the complicated task.

Topics (Selection):

- Internal market and financial services
- International and European Affairs

Publications (Selection):

- My Secret Brexit Diary: A Glorious Illusion, 2021