

George Cunningham – Bio – January 2025

George Cunningham is a **UK Liberal Democrat politician and international affairs specialist**. He is an elected member of the **Lib Dems Federal International Relations Committee** and a **Lib Dem ALDE (Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe) Council member**, including co-Chair of its **Policy Advisory Group on China**.



He completed his 3-year mandate as **Chair of Lib Dems Abroad** at the end of 2024, having been **Chair of Lib Dems Overseas** (2018-2021, 2024), and **Chair of Brussels and Europe Lib Dems** (2016). He was also **Chair of the party's subcommittee on China** (2022-24) and a member of the **Liberal International Fair Trade Working Group** (2023-24). He stood as a **Lib Dem parliamentary candidate** in the 2015 General Election.

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

Previous to that, he was the **Deputy EU 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 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) during the 9/11 attacks.

He had worked for thirty years for the EU across **all the main foreign policy files**, especially **foreign and security policy, trade and public diplomacy**.

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). His book - **Journey to Become a Diplomat** - was published in 2005 by the Foreign Policy Association of New York.

Since retirement, George has been a speaker and organiser of **webinars on Afghanistan, China and the Indo-Pacific** and trained **Gulf Cooperation Council Diplomats in Riyadh** for the College of Europe. He has written on the Indo-Pacific for **Sasakawa USA**. In December 2022, he participated in a mission organised by SIGNAL to **Israel on creating a China strategy** and played a major part in the resolution **A Liberal Strategy for Europe's Relationship with China** being adopted by ALDE at its Congress in Stockholm in May 2023.

George is married with two grown-up children. He is a dual UK/Polish national.