

Dr. h.c. Edelgard Bulmahn

Vice President of the German Bundestag; former Federal Minister of Education and Research

Edelgard Bulmahn represents the constituency Hanover city II in Lower Saxony.

Originally from Petershagen in North Rhine-Westphalia, she joined the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) during her time in secondary school in 1969. Before entering university, she moved to Israel to work in a kibbutz for a year. Upon her return, Edelgard Bulmahn enrolled at Gottfried-Wilhelm-Leibniz University in Hanover to study political science and English language and literature. She qualified as a teacher after passing the first and second state examinations in 1978 and 1980 respectively.

After serving as a teacher at Lutherschule, a secondary school in Hanover, she ran for the German Bundestag and won a seat in the elections in January 1987. She has been reelected to the German Bundestag in every election since 1987 and has always directly secured her mandate.

Currently, she is Vice President of the German Bundestag and a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee and of the Sub-Committee on Civilian Crisis Prevention, Conflict Management and Integrated Action. Edelgard has a proven track record in education, research and innovation policy. For more than twenty years, she has shaped German education, research and innovation policy in multiple roles. Amongst other positions, she was chairwoman of the committee on Education, Science, Research and Technology and Technology Assessment from 1994-1996 and spokeswoman of the SPD parliamentary group for education and research from 1996-1998.

A milestone in her career, Edelgard Bulmahn served as Federal Minister for Education and Research from 1998 until November 2005. During her tenure, she implemented the Bologna Process, reformed the student's funding and loans system (BAföG), set up junior professorships and implemented major funding programs especially for young scientists such as the Sofja Kovalevskaja prize or the Emmy Noether program. Moreover, she initiated the very successful German Universities Excellence Initiative and set up the Pact for Research and Innovation to foster the competitiveness of the German science system. She also initiated a nationwide program in order to establish so called all-day schools in Germany to improve education and individual support of children and youths.

Throughout her life, Edelgard has deeply cared for the values of social democracy. One of her goals was always to enable people to have a good life. Education and research policy served as an excellent area to work towards improving education and drive innovation.

Edelgard Bulmahn further widened her portfolio to include economic policy as chairwoman of the Committee on Economics and Technology from 2005 until 2009 and spokeswoman of the SPD parliamentary group in the Study Commission on Growth, Wellbeing and Quality of Life from 2011 to 2013.

To honor her great commitment and her achievements, she received the Christian-Peter-Beuth Prize in 2008, the Sophie-de-la-Roche Prize of the German Association of Women Academics in 2010 and an honorary doctorate from the German-Jordanian University in Amman in 2016.

She is also involved in a number of boards of trustees of science and research institutions and foundations. Her strong interest in the transatlantic relationship is complemented by her role as deputy chairwoman of the Atlantik-Brücke, one of the most renowned organizations in Germany working on German-US relations. Moreover, she is a member of the board of trustees of the Humboldt University Berlin, the Deutsche Telekom Foundation, the German Institute for Economic Research, the Berghof Foundation and the Mechanical Engineering Industry association's Impulse foundation.

Edelgard Bulmahn is married to Prof. Dr. Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn, a renowned landscape historian at Leibniz University in Hanover. In her free time, Edelgard enjoys reading, sports and gardening. She divides her time between Hanover and Berlin.