

David O'Sullivan Biography



David O'Sullivan has a long and distinguished career in the European Public Service, spanning over four decades. He has served in several senior official posts. He was the Ambassador of the European Union to the United States from 2014-2019.

Prior to his appointment as Ambassador to the US, he was the Chief Operating Officer of the *European External Action Service* and responsible for establishing this new EU diplomatic service.

Mr. O'Sullivan's career includes a number of notable positions within the European Commission: Chief of Staff to Commission President Romano Prodi (1999-2000) and Secretary General of the European Commission (2000-2005). He has extensive trade experience as Director General for Trade (2005-2010). He was Chief Negotiator for the Doha Development Round. He was responsible for overseeing the launch of a number of free trade agreements and concluded the EU's agreement with South Korea. Before joining the Commission, he started his career with the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (1977-1979).

Since retiring from the European public service in February 2019, Mr. O'Sullivan has worked as a consultant, notably with the Brussels office of the law firm, [Steptoe and Johnson LLP](#).

Mr. O'Sullivan is Chairman of the Governing Board of the [European Policy Centre](#), and the first non-Belgian member of the Governing Board of the [King Baudouin Foundation](#), the leading Belgian philanthropic body.

Early European Commission Career Timeline

- 1999 – Director General for Education and Culture.
- 1996 – Directorate General for Employment
- 1994 – Deputy Head of Commissioner Flynn's Cabinet.
- 1993 – Member of Commissioner Flynn's Cabinet (Social Dialogue and Labour Law).
- 1989 – Head of Unit in the Task Force for Education, Youth and Training.

- 1985 – Member of Commissioner Sutherland's Cabinet (Social Affairs and Relations with the European Parliament).
- 1981 – First Secretary, Delegation of the European Commission in Japan.
- 1979 – Directorate General for External Relations.

Academia

Mr. O'Sullivan graduated from Trinity College, Dublin with a degree in Economics and Sociology (1975) and completed post-graduate studies at the College of Europe, Bruges (1976).

While at Trinity, he was Auditor and debating Gold Medalist of the College Historical Society, and a winner of the Irish Times debating competition.

He holds an Honorary Doctorate from his *alma mater* Trinity College, Dublin (2014). He has been a visiting Professor at the European College of Parma. He was awarded an Honorary Doctorate from the Dublin Institute of Technology (2005).

Since retirement, he has worked as a Special Counsellor for Steptoe and Johnson LLP, until 11 December 2022, and as Director General of the Institute of International and European Affairs in Dublin until 15 January 2023.

He serves *pro bono* as Chairman of the Governing Board of the European Policy Centre, and as a member of the governing board of the King Baudouin Foundation.

Honors and Awards

- European of the Year by the European Movement of Ireland (1999).
- Alumnus of the Year by the College of Europe (2013).
- EU Transatlantic Business Award by the American Chamber of Commerce (June 2014).
- Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur (France, 2019).
- Grand Officier de l'Ordre de Léopold (Belgium, 2019).

Personal Biography

Mr. O'Sullivan was born in 1953 in Dublin, Ireland. [REDACTED]

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He speaks English and French, has a good working knowledge of Spanish, German, and Irish, and some elements of Japanese.