

Didier Burkhalter

Federal Councillor, Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA), Switzerland



Personal details

Surname: BURKHALTER

First names: Didier Eric

Date of birth: 17th April 1960

Place of origin: Neuchâtel, Sumiswald BE

Civil status: Married, three sons

Education

1966 - 1975 Primary school in Auviernier, secondary school in Colombier

1975 - 1978 Cantonal high school in Neuchâtel – science stream Type C baccalaureate

1978 - 1982 University of Neuchâtel – Faculty of Economics
Degree in Economics with major in Economic Policy

1979 to 1983 Several courses in English in UK and German in Switzerland

Professional experience

1981 - 1982 **Staff member** in regional economics and IT, assistant in economic policy, University of Neuchâtel

1983 Produced a study on the economic policy of small industrialised countries in Europe from 1970 to 1983

1984 - 1986 **Economic editor** at the Society for Switzerland's Economic Development (SDES), Geneva

1985 – 1989 **Editor in chief** of 'National', newspaper of Neuchâtel FDP

1986 - 1989 **Cantonal secretary** of Neuchâtel FDP

1988 - 1989 **Secretary for French-speaking Switzerland** (part time) of FDP Switzerland

1988 **Editor in chief** of 'Politique', French magazine of FDP Switzerland

1989 - 1991 **Secretary for French-speaking Switzerland** (full-time) of FDP Switzerland

1991 –2005 **Member of Communal Council** of town of Neuchâtel:

1991 – 1996 Head of Public Works, Police, Fire Service, Civil Protection, Tourism and Transport

1997 - 2005 Head of Public Works, Sport and Hospitals

1994, 1998, 2001 **President of Communal council of Neuchâtel** on three occasions (June 1994 – June 1995 ; June 1998 – June 1999 ; June 2001 – June 2002)

Selection of dossiers New waste water treatment plant, du Port car park, renovation of railway station and Fun'ambule, opening of National Exhibition, new Pourtalès hospital, new stadium multiplex at 'La Maladière', Philip Morris International R&D centre

1st November 2009 to 31st December 2011 **Head** of the Federal Department of Home Affairs FDHA

Since 1st January 2012 **Head** of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA

4.12.2013 Election as **president of the Swiss Confederation for 2014**

Political career

From 1985 Member of Liberal Democratic Party (FDP)

1988 - 1990 **Member of Communal Parliament** in Hauterive / NE

1990 – 2001 **Member of Neuchâtel Cantonal Parliament** (Rapporteur, then President of Finance Committee, member of Committee on State Protection, Europe Committee, Taxation Committee, Vice-President of Commission on the Cantonal Constitution)

1991 –2005 **Member of Neuchâtel Communal Council**

2003 - 2007 **Member of National Council**

Defence Committee, Legal Affairs Committee, Judicial Committee, commission « programme d'allègement 04 »)

Since August 2004 Member of FDP Switzerland national committee

2005-2009 Member of Swiss delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE

2007-2009 **Member of Council of States**

President of FDP Liberal Group in Council of States

Vice-President of Finance Committee, member of Security Policy Committee, member of Committee for Science, Education and Culture, Vice-President of EFTA/EP delegation, member of delegation for Francophonie

16th September 2009 Elected **Federal Councillor** by Swiss Parliament

4.12.2013 Election as **president of the Swiss Confederation for 2014**

Military career

1980 Recruit school in Frauenfeld

1984 NCO school in Frauenfeld

Passed out from Frauenfeld as senior NCO

1991 Specialist officer in Press and Radio Division

Hobbies

Writing: Publication of book entitled 'La Maladière': a feeling of eternity, spring 2007

Sports: Cycling, swimming, skiing, football, hiking

Other: Reading, travelling