

# COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

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## **JOSCHKA FISCHER**

Joschka Fischer is the distinguished visiting diplomat at the Council on Foreign Relations. Fischer, former German foreign minister and vice chancellor, will focus on the issues and challenges facing Europe and the transatlantic relationship.

Fischer entered politics at the height of the German student movement in 1968. In 1982 he joined the newly-formed Green party. One year later, he was elected to the first Green Party Fraction that would serve in the federal German parliament, the *Bundestag*. Soon thereafter, he became one of the leading figureheads of the German Green movement. In December 1985, he was sworn in as the first ever Green Party minister in the federal state of Hesse where he held the portfolios of the Environment and Energy. From 1987 to 1991, Fischer was head of the Green Party parliamentary fraction in the state legislature of Hesse and from 1991 to 1994 he served a second tenure as Hessian minister of the environment and energy and held the additional portfolios of federal affairs and deputy minister president.

Following the re-election of the Green Party to the German *Bundestag* in 1994, Fischer became cochairman of the Greens' federal parliamentary fraction. During his years as an opposition leader, he leveraged his party's growing public acceptance into political success and moved the Green Party to the centre of German politics, paving the way for participation in the nation's federal government. In September 1998, the Social Democrats, led by Gerhard Schröder, were able to form a coalition government with the Green Party that ended sixteen years of Christian Democratic rule. At that time, Fischer became minister of foreign affairs and vice chancellor of Germany.

During his tenure, Fischer supported the first German active military mission since the Second World War, with Germany's involvement in Kosovo. German troops also joined the NATO mission in Afghanistan despite Fischer's reluctance to commit support for the American invasion of Iraq. By 2005, Fischer was the second longest serving foreign minister in German postwar history.

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