

Wim Kok
Prime Minister of the Netherlands
President of the Council of the European Union

Willem (Wim) Kok was born at Bergambacht on Sept. 29, 1938. After completing his secondary education, he attended Nijenrode Business School. He then completed his military service and worked for a trading company for a short time.

In 1961, Mr. Kok was appointed assistant international officer of the Netherlands Federation of Trade Unions Construction Section. He was a staff member for economic affairs of the same union in 1965 and, in 1967, union secretary.

Mr. Kok was appointed secretary to the Netherlands Federation of Trade Unions in 1969 and deputy chairman in 1972. He was chairman of the federation from 1973 to 1985 and after it merged with the Dutch Federation of Catholic Trade Union he became chairman of the new Netherlands Federation of Trade Unions. From 1979 to 1982, Mr. Kok also served as chairman of the European Trade Union Confederation.

From 1986 to 1989 and again after the 1994 election, Mr. Kok was a member of the Lower House of the States General and Leader of the parliamentary Labour Party.

Mr. Kok was elected deputy chairman of the Socialist International in 1989. Other activities have included deputy chairman of the Socioeconomic Council, employees' chairman of the Joint Industrial Labour Council, vice-chairman of the Board of "De Nederlandsche Bank," visiting lecturer at the Institute of Social Studies and advisor to the European Commission.

In November 1989, Mr. Kok was Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance until Aug. 22, 1994, when he was appointed Prime Minister and Minister for General Affairs of the Netherlands. In January 1997, Mr. Kok became President of the Council of the European Union.

Mr. Kok is married and has two sons and a daughter.