

# Bilderberg Group

The **Bilderberg Group**, **Bilderberg conference**, **Bilderberg meetings** or **Bilderberg Club** is an annual private conference of about 120–150 political leaders and experts from industry, finance, academia and the media, established in 1954.<sup>[2][3]</sup> About two thirds of the participants come from Europe and the rest from North America; one third from politics and government and the rest from other fields.<sup>[2][4]</sup>

## 1 Origin

The first conference was held at the **Hotel de Bilderberg** in **Oosterbeek**, **Netherlands**, from 29 to 31 May 1954. It was initiated by several people, including Polish politician-in-exile **Józef Retinger**, concerned about the growth of **anti-Americanism** in Western Europe, who proposed an international conference at which leaders from European countries and the United States would be brought together with the aim of promoting **Atlanticism**—better understanding between the cultures of the United States and Western Europe to foster cooperation on political, economic and defense issues.<sup>[5]</sup>

Retinger approached Prince **Bernhard** of the Netherlands who agreed to promote the idea, together with former Belgian Prime Minister **Paul Van Zeeland**, and the then head of **Unilever**, Dutchman **Paul Rijkens**. Bernhard in turn contacted **Walter Bedell Smith**, then head of the **CIA**, who asked Eisenhower adviser **Charles Douglas Jackson** to deal with the suggestion.<sup>[6]</sup> The guest list was to be drawn up by inviting two attendees from each nation, one of each to represent conservative and liberal points of view.<sup>[5]</sup> Fifty delegates from 11 countries in Western Europe attended the first conference, along with 11 Americans.<sup>[7]</sup>

The success of the meeting led the organizers to arrange an annual conference. A permanent steering committee was established with Retinger appointed as permanent secretary. As well as organizing the conference the steering committee also maintained a register of attendee names and contact details with the aim of creating an informal network of individuals who could call upon one another in a private capacity.<sup>[8]</sup> Conferences were held in France, Germany, and Denmark over the following three years. In 1957 the first US conference was held on **St. Simons Island**, **Georgia**, with \$30,000 from the **Ford Foundation**. The foundation also supplied funding for the 1959 and 1963 conferences.<sup>[6]</sup>

## 2 Activities and goals

The group's original goal of promoting Atlanticism has grown; In 2001, **Denis Healey**, a Bilderberg group founder and, a steering committee member for 30 years, said: "To say we were striving for a one-world government is exaggerated, but not wholly unfair. Those of us in Bilderberg felt we couldn't go on forever fighting one another for nothing and killing people and rendering millions homeless. So we felt that a single community throughout the world would be a good thing."<sup>[9]</sup>

According to former chairman **Étienne Davignon** in 2011, a major attraction of Bilderberg group meetings is that they provide an opportunity for participants to speak and debate candidly and to find out what major figures really think, without the risk of off-the-cuff comments becoming fodder for controversy in the media.<sup>[10]</sup> A 2008 press release from the "American Friends of Bilderberg" stated that "Bilderberg's only activity is its annual Conference and that at the meetings, no resolutions were proposed, no votes taken, and no policy statements issued".<sup>[11]</sup> However in November 2009 the group hosted a dinner meeting at the **Château of Val-Duchesse** in **Brussels** outside its annual conference to promote the candidacy of **Herman Van Rompuy** for President of the **European Council**.<sup>[12]</sup>

## 3 Organizational structure

Meetings are organized by a steering committee with two members from each of approximately 18 nations.<sup>[13]</sup> Official posts include a chairman and a **Honorary Secretary General**.<sup>[14]</sup> The group's rules do not contain a membership category but former participants receive the annual conference reports.<sup>[15]</sup> The only category that exists is "member of the Steering Committee".<sup>[16]</sup> Besides the committee, there is a separate advisory group with overlapping membership.<sup>[17]</sup>

Dutch economist **Ernst van der Beugel** became permanent secretary in 1960, upon Retinger's death. Prince Bernhard continued to serve as the meeting's chairman until 1976, the year of his involvement in the **Lockheed** affair. The position of **Honorary American Secretary General** has been held successively by **Joseph E. Johnson** of the **Carnegie Endowment**, **William Bundy** of **Princeton**, **Theodore L. Eliot, Jr.**, former **US Ambassador** to **Afghanistan**, and **Casimir A. Yost** of **Georgetown Uni-**



Prince Bernhard of Lippe-Biesterfeld in 1942

versity's Institute for the Study of Diplomacy.<sup>[18]</sup>

According to James A. Bill the “steering committee usually met twice a year to plan programs and to discuss the participant list”.<sup>[19]</sup>

### 3.1 Chairmen of the Steering Committee

- Prince Bernhard of Lippe-Biesterfeld (1954–1975)<sup>[20]</sup>
- Alec Douglas-Home (1977–1980)<sup>[20]</sup>
- Walter Scheel (1981–1985)<sup>[21][22]</sup>
- Eric Roll, Baron Roll of Ipsden (1986–1989)<sup>[23]</sup>
- Peter Carington, 6th Baron Carrington (1990–1998)<sup>[7][24]</sup>
- Étienne Davignon (1999–2011)<sup>[13][25][26]</sup>
- Henri de Castries (since 2012)<sup>[27]</sup>

## 4 Participants

Main article: List of Bilderberg participants

A 2008 press release from the “American Friends of Bilderberg” stated that the names of attendees were available to the press.<sup>[11]</sup> Historically, attendee lists have been weighted towards bankers, politicians, and directors of large businesses.<sup>[28]</sup>

Heads of state, including King Juan Carlos I of Spain and Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands, have attended

meetings.<sup>[14][29]</sup> Prominent politicians from North America and Europe are past attendees. In past years, board members from many large publicly traded corporations have attended, including IBM, Xerox, Royal Dutch Shell, Nokia and Daimler.<sup>[14]</sup>

The 2009 meeting participants in Greece included Greek prime minister Kostas Karamanlis, Finnish prime minister Matti Vanhanen,<sup>[30]</sup> Swedish foreign minister Carl Bildt, US Deputy Secretary of State James Steinberg, US Secretary of the Treasury Timothy Geithner, World Bank president Robert Zoellick, President of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso, Queen Sofia of Spain, and Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands.<sup>[31]</sup>

In 2013, a source involved in the planning for the group’s meeting that year in Watford, UK, was reported to have said that people whose names are not publicly issued may sometimes turn up “just for the day”.<sup>[32]</sup>

## 5 Recent meetings

Main article: List of Bilderberg meetings

- 2005 (5–8 May) at the Dorint Sofitel Seehotel Überfahrt in Rottach-Egern, Germany<sup>[33]</sup>
- 2006 (8–11 June) at the Brookstreet Hotel in Kanata, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada<sup>[34]</sup>
- 2007 (31 May – 3 June) at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel,<sup>[35]</sup> in Şişli, Istanbul, Turkey.
- 2008 (5–8 June) at the Westfields Marriott in Chantilly, Virginia, USA<sup>[11][36]</sup>
- 2009 (14–17 May) at the Astir Palace resort in Vouliagmeni, Greece<sup>[37][38]</sup>
- 2010 (3–7 June) at the Hotel Dolce in Sitges, Spain<sup>[39]</sup>
- 2011 (9–12 June) at the Suvretta House in St. Moritz, Switzerland
- 2012 (31 May – 3 June) at Westfields Marriott hotel in Chantilly, Virginia, USA
- 2013 (8–9 June) at the Grove Hotel, Watford, United Kingdom<sup>[40]</sup>
- 2014 (29 May – 3 June) at the Marriott hotel in Copenhagen, Denmark<sup>[41]</sup>
- 2015 (9–14 June, 2015) at Telfs, in Tyrol, Austria<sup>[42]</sup>

## 6 Criticism

Partly because of its working methods to ensure strict privacy, the Bilderberg Group has been criticised for its lack of transparency and accountability.<sup>[43]</sup> Due to its privacy, Bilderberg has been accused of conspiracies.<sup>[10][1][44]</sup> This outlook has been popular on both extremes of the political spectrum, even if they disagree about the exact nature of the group's intentions. Some on the left accuse the Bilderberg group of conspiring to impose capitalist domination,<sup>[45]</sup> while some on the right have accused the group of conspiring to impose a world government and planned economy.<sup>[46]</sup>

In 2005 Davignon discussed accusations of the group striving for a one-world government with the BBC: "It is unavoidable and it doesn't matter. There will always be people who believe in conspiracies but things happen in a much more incoherent fashion... When people say this is a secret government of the world I say that if we were a secret government of the world we should be bloody ashamed of ourselves."<sup>[44]</sup>

In a 1994 report *Right Woos Left*, published by the Political Research Associates, investigative journalist Chip Berlet argued that right-wing populist conspiracy theories about the Bilderberg group date back as early as 1964 and can be found in Phyllis Schlafly's self-published book *A Choice, Not an Echo*,<sup>[47]</sup> which promoted a conspiracy theory in which the Republican Party was secretly controlled by elitist intellectuals dominated by members of the Bilderberg group, whose internationalist policies would pave the way for world communism.<sup>[48]</sup> In August 2010 former Cuban president Fidel Castro wrote a controversial article for the Cuban Communist Party newspaper *Granma* in which he cited Daniel Estulin's 2006 book *The Secrets of the Bilderberg Club*,<sup>[49]</sup> which, as quoted by Castro, describes "sinister cliques and the Bilderberg lobbyists" manipulating the public "to install a world government that knows no borders and is not accountable to anyone but its own self".<sup>[45]</sup> Proponents of Bilderberg conspiracy theories in the United States include individuals and groups such as the John Birch Society,<sup>[46][50]</sup> political activist Phyllis Schlafly,<sup>[50]</sup> writer Jim Tucker,<sup>[51]</sup> political activist Lyndon LaRouche,<sup>[52]</sup> radio host Alex Jones,<sup>[2][53][54]</sup> and politician Jesse Ventura, who made the Bilderberg group a topic of a 2009 episode of his TruTV series *Conspiracy Theory with Jesse Ventura*.<sup>[55]</sup> Non-American proponents include Russian-Canadian writer Daniel Estulin.<sup>[56]</sup>

Concerns about lobbying have arisen.<sup>[57][58]</sup>

## 7 See also

- Council on Foreign Relations
- List of Bilderberg Group participants

- Trilateral Commission
- Bohemian Grove
- Valdai International Discussion Club
- World Economic Forum

## 8 References

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- [3] "Japan–US Relations — Past, Present and Future". *The Daily Yomiuri* (Tokyo). 8 December 1991. Rockefeller: The idea (of creating the Trilateral Commission) was incorporated in a speech that I made in the spring of 1972 for the benefit of some industrial forums that the Chase held in different cities around Europe ... Then Zbig (Zbig Brzezinski) and I both attended a meeting of the Bilderberg Group ... and was shot down in flames. There was very little enthusiasm for the idea. I think they felt that they had a very congenial group, and they didn't want to have it interfered with by another element that would — I don't know what they thought, but in any case, they were not in favor.
- [4] "Bilderberg Official Website". Retrieved 15 May 2014.
- [5] Hatch, Alden (1962). "The Hôtel de Bilderberg". *HRH Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands: An authorized biography*. London: Harrap. OCLC 2359663. The idea was to get two people from each country who would give the conservative and liberal slant
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### 11.1 Text

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LorenzoB, Frotz, Ivangeotsky, Barafost, Nevit, Baristarim, Seba5618, Cocytus, SandyDancer, Rashaun, Ash, LegendGamer, Yrgh, Ssolbergj, Manticore, J.delanoy, Trusilver, Uncle Dick, 72Dino, Maurice Carbonaro, KILNA, Testrundelta, Андрей Романенко, Gabefarkas, McSly, Omeganumber, Noahcs, Sdrinkwater, Ryanheitner, STeamTraen, Sdoerr, Mark Asread, Lordfrankish, Shoessns, White 720, Joshua Issac, Rapidlaser, Gwen Gale, DorganBot, Bonadea, Andy Marchbanks, Straw Cat, Useight, Martial75, Mokgen, Idioma-bot, Duchamps comb, Hugo999, VolkovBot, CWii, TaylorSAllen, Jeff G., TXiKiBoT, Pahari Sahib, Eiku, TonyGosling, Thycid, Rei-bot, Ask123, Rbpolsen, Myrddin embryos, GeorgeFormby1, Vert et Noir, Silent52, Falcon8765, Hereward77, Alferd John, HeadSnap, AlleborgoBot, Climie.ca, Dariusk, Kaprikorn26, Nsa15, SieBot, Brenont, Spartan, WereSpielChequers, BotMultichill, Jack Merridew, Axiome2-enwiki, Ravensfire, Architect JBF, Yintan, McKenna boy, RucasHosT, Toddst1, Flyer22, Emilfarb, Chhandama, Reapermage1990, Baxter9, Hzh, Damian Thorne, Avnjay, Bagatelle, Lightmouse, Polbot, Martinlc, Jeffums124, Vice regent, ForeverRedAce, Bombastus, Mtylor848, Nn123645, Mblaxill, ImageRemovalBot, ObfuscatePenguin, Smashville, Ianash70, Dukered, ClueBot, Ayeiare, QueenofBattle, Rumping, Profitable Prophet, K-pachs, The Thing That Should Not Be, EoGuy, Lord Chao, ImperfectlyInformed, MikeVitale, Freedom77-enwiki, Blue bear sd, Mezigue, CounterVandalismBot, 911truth-taker, Xrockrichardx, Auntof6, Counteraction, Rzczach, Logicbdj, Stepshep, Takeaway, Excirial, John Nevard, Eelnomtih, Terrawatt, TheRedPenOfDoom, Searcher 1990, Curious Blue, Ark25, BOTarate, Wallstreetjournaloutlook, Thusled, Rui Gabriel Correia, Thingg, ElJay Arem, Scalhotrod, Versus22, Glassbricks, DumZiBoT, Semitransgenic, BarretB, XLinkBot, Fastly, DaL33T, Cmr08, Chrsander6, ZooFari, FlashNerdX, RyanCross, HexaChord, Education4earth, Addbot, Cashualnal, Donhoraldo, ArjanH, Theleftorium, Dimmy79, Nohomers48, AkhtaBot, Ronhjones, Pasym, Laurinavicius, Chamal N, Bazza1971, Glane23, Lihaas, Chzz, Favonian, Qwrk, KPfister, DoctorSerizawa, Tide rolls, Achilles last stand, Kgro, Faunas, First Light, JEN9841, Xowets, Luckas-bot, Yobot, Fraggel81, Emolvr69, Legobot II, Newportm, BeBoldInEdits, AnomieBOT, lexec1, Tucoxn, Piano non troppo, Flopsy Mopsy and Cottonmouth, Kingpin13, MaterialsScientist, Citation bot, Froklsnt, ArthurBot, Xqbot, Thephos, Wolfgangus Mozart, Estlandia-enwiki, Prowikiernumberone, Seany-boy0627, Jeffrey Mall, Sellyme, Mike-Kerkhoven, Jmundo, Anna Frodesiak, Fotisaros, Hi878, Off2riorob, Trafford09, Griffinofwales, SOPHIAN, Felix.Hoedt, Claireday, GWBletitring, FrescoBot, Alarics, Ikedirty318, Loulouw-enwiki, Jamieelizabeth76, Haeinous, Hell in a Bucket, Xhaoz, MitsosK, Basilhoff, Notorious Kelly, DrilBot, WQLrich, Chazachapman, I dream of horses, Rokaszil, Gleaner77, HarrySTrumanII, D8man, TheFourFreedom, Jabbawokee, Fat&Happy, Itnix, Bilderberg ro, Dananadan, Stoicasergiu 80, Moldovan 2007, Rimbauerdavid, Imo cezar, Pfa clujnapoca, Orsb, Turian, Pristino, Arbero, Bilderberg1954, Kayovas, Cocoreaux, Archphil, DriveMySol, Searine, Lotje, ElijahOmega, Golddyf, Vrenator, Jiu8i, Freedom Day, Reaper Eternal, Luisaaah123, CaminoEsperanza, DA1, Visite fortunate prolongée, Merlinsorca, EdificeWrecks, Dj6ual, BrightBlackHeaven, Peter 2009, RjwilmsiBot, Lung salad, Ralph Eubank, DASH-Bot, Weathermap, EmausBot, Hasfg, Acather96, 2010 Peter, Logical Cowboy, Nuujinn, Ncsr11, JohnValeron, Tommy2010, Wikipelli, John Shandy, ZéroBot, Mrfortin87, Prayerfortheworld, Ida Shaw, Josve05A, H3llBot, Nlnewman3, Drryanwilliams, UNLiMiTED TRUTH, Know business, Dipsie1789, Markfadden, Inka 888, Jejspeak, Layj13, Targaryen, Snowjohn75yahoom, ClueBot NG, Donspeak, Idlisambar, Lhimec, Bulldog73, Frietjes, Alphalictor, Ehrrej, Costesseyboy, Sta00011, Ryan Vesey, Anupmehra, Quick and Dirty User Account, Sören Koopmann, Oddbodz, TestWiki19, Helpful Pixie Bot, Novusuna, Neiljtipton, Gob Lofa, 2001:db8, DBigXray, 7uu, Hodeken, Eloise-Glasshouse, Wiki Editor211, Northamerica1000, Dvda12345, VanX-InnX, Cyberpower678, Realtimencensor, Wiki13, Seergenius, Sailingfanblues, Andy.w.sparks, Meatsgains, Harizotoh9, Meclee, ProudIrishAspie, 666serbia, BattyBot, Ehr1Ros2, Ddcem8991, Cyberbot II, ChrisGualtieri, EagerToddler39, Masterdante007, 789it789, MasterJakeX, Proper Stranger, Jamesx12345, Samee, Crimtide, Sathes Jey, Wuerzele, EvergreenFir, ElHef, BayShrimp, LahmacunKebab, PrivateMasterHD, Kmstorms, FDMS4, Swibselo, Roborule, Chris vI, Bildenberg, Lagoset, Monkbot, Redknight055, Dmisdly, Killroy718, Godsy, KasparBot, Jacob Heth, PeaceintheMiddleEast and Anonymous: 1022

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