

Herman Van Rompuy was the first President of the European Commission of Heads of State and Government. In 2009, when the Treaty of Lisbon came into effect, he became full-time President of the European Council, going on to serve two terms in the post.

In his time in the cockpit of global politics Herman advocated for the stability of the euro, was involved in various political conflicts, and was tasked with bringing heads of state into alignment on European issues. During his time in office, he delivered around 250 speeches a year around the world, covering as many miles as the Pope or President Obama.

After studying philosophy and applied economics, Herman worked as an economist with the National Bank of Belgium. He launched his political career as vice-president of the youth council of the Christian People's Party (CVP, now the CD&V – Christian Democratic and Flemish party) before becoming a member of the CVP party bureau. He later held various positions within his party and the Belgian parliament, including as party chairman and co-opted senator.

In national politics Herman served as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Budget, member of the Chamber of Representatives, Minister of State, Chairman of the Chamber of Representatives and finally Prime Minister of Belgium.

As well as his political life, Herman has taught extensively at universities. In 2014, as he prepared to leave the European Council he was awarded the Charlemagne Prize, one of the most prestigious European prizes, for his contribution in the service of Europe. Previous recipients of the Prize include Winston Churchill, Henry Kissinger, Bill Clinton, Pope John Paul II and Angela Merkel.