

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Handwritten notes:
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Bio Book B

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BIOGRAPHY OF CORNELIS BERKHOUWER
PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Cornelis BERKHOUWER comes from a family of market-gardeners and stock-breeders in the province of North Holland. He was born in Alkmaar on 19 March 1919 and attended the grammar school there. In the crisis years of the 30's he worked on the land and also earned a living as assistant to a cheese merchant.

From 1937 to 1942 he studied in the faculty of law at Amsterdam Municipal University. Although he did not belong to a students' union, he played an active part in University life and soon attracted attention through the variety of his interests.

In 1942 Berkhouwer established himself as a solicitor and barrister in his native town of Alkmaar and in 1946 he gained his Doctorate of Law in Amsterdam with his thesis on 'The conversion of null and void judicial acts'.

As a rising lawyer he began to make a name by winning legal contests on the responsibility of the physician and on admissible and inadmissible advertising. He is still registered as a barrister at Alkmaar district court.

Since its foundation in 1946, Berkhouwer has been a member of the People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD), the third political grouping in the Netherlands. In November 1956 the VVD took him into Parliament, where he specialized in legal and foreign affairs. From 1959 to 1963 he was Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee for Relations with Overseas Territories, in which capacity he paid several visits to Surinam and the Dutch Antilles.