

FRANKREICH

Minister of National Education

Xavier Darcos

Ministry for National Education
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Born on 14 July 1947

He is an *agrégé*ⁱ and has doctorates in Latin Studies, French and Human Sciences.

After studying at Périgueux *lycée* and the University of Bordeaux, he taught first at Périgueux, and then at Bordeaux's *Lycée Montaigne* (1982-87) and *Lycée Louis-le-Grand* in Paris (1987-92) where he prepared students for the entry examination to the *Ecole Normale Supérieure*ⁱⁱ.

Appointed chief inspector of schools in 1992, since 1993 he has been Principal Private Secretary to the Minister for National Education (François Bayrou), Education Advisor to the Prime Minister (Alain Juppé) and Doyen of France's School Inspectorate (with François Bayrou and Claude Allègre).

A former visiting professor of comparative literature at the University of the Sorbonne-Paris IV (1996-1999), he has *inter alia* written several literary studies, including a 5-volume history of French literature through the centuries (Hachette), a *Histoire de la littérature française* (Hachette), a biography of Mérimée (Flammarion) which won the *Prix France-Télévision*, and essays on education such as *L'art d'apprendre à ignorer* (Plon), *Deux voix pour une école* (D. de Brouwer), *L'école de Jules Ferry* (Hachette).

Very involved in a variety of cultural and musical organizations, he was a member of the regional Economic and Social Council from 1978 to 1994. Deputy (responsible

ⁱ holder of the *agrégation*, a post-graduate competitive examination for the teaching profession
ⁱⁱ prestigious higher-education establishment

for culture) to the Mayor of Périgueux, Yves Guéna, from 1989 to 1997, he succeeded him as Mayor in January 1997 (re-elected in 2001), and was then elected Senator for Dordogne in September 1998, while concurrently chairing the *District de l'agglomération périgourdine* (1997-2000) [which grouped together several communes in the area], and then the *Communauté d'agglomération périgourdine* (2000-2002), which replaced the district in 2000.

In the Senate he was vice-chairman of the Cultural Affairs Committee, a member of the parliamentary delegation for the European Union and of the delegation for women's rights and equal opportunities between men and women, treasurer of the parliamentary association for Francophony, and vice-chairman of the fact-finding mission on Tibet.

A founder member of the *Union pour la Majorité Présidentielle*ⁱⁱⁱ and the club « *Dialogue et initiatives* », he is a member of the *Union pour un Mouvement Populaire* political bureau, Dordogne department UMP Chairman, and has been head of the UMP opposition group on Aquitaine Regional Council since 28 March 2004.

Awarded the *Marianne d'or des maires de France*^{iv} in 1999 (for the project "Périgueux 2010"), he is a *Officier de la Légion d'honneur*, *Officier de l'Ordre national du Mérite* and *Commandeur des palmes académiques*. He was elected in June 2006 to the French Academy of Political Sciences.

From 2002 to 2005, he was appointed Minister Delegate for Schools in Jean-Pierre Raffarin's government, and he became Minister Delegate for Cooperation, Development and Francophony.

From September 2005 to May 2007, he is Ambassador, head of the permanent delegation of France to the OCDE.

Since May 2007, he is Minister of National Education.

ⁱⁱⁱ *Union pour la Majorité Présidentielle* subsequently became *Union pour un Mouvement Populaire*
^{iv} high distinction awarded to a French mayor for a specific achievement