

Biographical note of Emma Bonino

Emma Bonino is Vice-Chair of the Italian Senate.

She has been Minister for International Trade and European Affairs. First elected to the Italian Chamber of Deputies in 1976, she has served either in the Italian or in the European Parliament continuously since then, except when she was European Commissioner.

Between 1994 and 1999, she was European Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid, Fisheries, Consumer Policy, Consumer Health Protection and Food Safety.

As European Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid, Emma Bonino was responsible for managing the European Union's Emergency Aid Program (ECHO), which had an average budget in excess of 800 million Euro per year, of which almost one-third was channelled through United Nations agencies. As such, she forged deep ties with all other actors in the humanitarian field, including High Commissioner Ogata and her deputy, the late Sergio Vieira de Mello, leading to the "Humanitarian Summit" in Madrid she organised in December 1995. Her major contribution to the humanitarian doctrine of these years has been her firm conviction that the delivery of humanitarian aid must go hand in hand with political action, in an integrated approach designed to ensure that humanitarian and human rights principles are respected at all times and do not become an alibi for inaction.

As European Commissioner, Emma Bonino confronted the major man-made crises of the 1990s, which resulted in millions of refugees and displaced persons, including in the Great Lakes Region and in the Balkans. Her frequent field-visits drew international attention to the crises in these regions, which she maintained required a political, not only humanitarian, response. In particular, her alarm call on the massacres being perpetrated in Srebrenica, and then the deportations in Kosovo, awakened the world's attention. In December 1997, as one of the promoters of the campaign, she signed on behalf of the European Commission the Ottawa Anti-Personnel Mines Convention.

At the same time, as part of her EU portfolio as European Commissioner, she managed complex cross-border and international issues which came under her competence: as Fisheries Commissioner she was responsible for the successful resolution of the fisheries dispute between Canada and Spain and then between Morocco and the EU, and as Commissioner for Consumer Policy, Consumer Health Protection and Food Safety, she oversaw the European Commission response to the Mad Cow Crisis.

In January 2005, Emma Bonino was elected Chair of the "Comitato dei Garanti", composed of senior politicians and former Prime Ministers, appointed by the Italian Government.

The Comitato supervises the disbursement of funds pledged by individuals for Tsunami Relief in 2005 in Italy, which to date have amounted to more than 50 million Euro. Emma Bonino currently divides her time between Europe and Cairo, Egypt, where she is a Distinguished Visiting Professor at the American University of Cairo; her time in Egypt has focused her expertise in human rights and humanitarian issues in the Middle East and North Africa. As part of her work in the region, in January 2004, she headed the political process that led to the Sana'a Inter-Governmental Regional Conference on Democracy, Human Rights and the Role of the ICC, organised by the Government of Yemen and the NGO No Peace Without Justice. The Sana'a Conference, an unprecedented meeting of

Governments and Civil Society from Arab and neighbouring countries, was a critical part of an ongoing awakening of democratic aspirations in the Middle East and North Africa, recognising that democracy is not just representative institutions, but respect for fundamental principles, particularly the rule of law and human rights.

Since July 2003, Emma Bonino has also been campaigning for ratification of the Maputo Protocol on “Women’s Rights in Africa” to the African Charter of Human and Peoples’ Rights as a comprehensive framework for the realisation of women’s rights in Africa. This is part of consistent work on sensitive political and cultural issues related to human rights, including “Stop FGM”, the international campaign for the abandonment of Female Genital Mutilation; “A Flower for the Women of Kabul” in 1998, an international action on discrimination against women in Taliban-controlled Afghanistan; and, already since her early political career in Italy, with her colleagues in the Radical Party, the 1970s Civil Rights and Women’s Rights Campaigns; her 1980s humanitarian commitments, including the creation in 1982 of “Italian Parliamentarians Against Hunger”, which resulted in a tenfold increase in the Italian financial commitment to development assistance, and her campaign for Civil and Political Rights in Eastern Europe.

Emma Bonino’s other major international commitments have included the European Parliament’s 2004 delegation to the Darfur region of Sudan and her November 2002 appointment as Chief Observer of the European Union Election Observation Mission to Ecuador’s Presidential Elections. In October 2002, she was also the Head of the Italian Government Delegation at the Inter-Governmental Conference of the Community of Democracies in Seoul. In 1999, she was appointed Board Member of the International Crisis Group.

Emma Bonino’s conviction that the rule of law is a pre-requisite for the protection of vulnerable people also finds expression in her long-standing commitment to the development and strengthening of the international criminal justice system. Since 1993, she has led the campaign for the establishment of the International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and for Rwanda, and for the establishment of the International Criminal Court. While she was EU Commissioner for Humanitarian Affairs, Emma Bonino was the Head of the European Commission Delegation to the Rome Diplomatic Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Establishment of an International Criminal Court in 1998, at which the Rome Statute was adopted.