

## **Steve Austen: Short Biography**

Dr h.c. Steve Austen (1944) studied economics and has been active in the European public domain since 1966, concentrating on the arts, heritage, cultural policy, international cooperation, civil society issues and entrepreneurship.

As an entrepreneur and pioneer, he started countless new initiatives, mostly NGOs, and was responsible for a variety of international cultural festivals, film and TV productions, books, magazines, and exhibitions including Berlin-Amsterdam/Amsterdam-Berlin in 1982/83 and La France aux Pays-Bas in 1985/86.

He was co-author of Amsterdam Cultural Capital of Europe 1987. Created the informal working body Gulliver, in close cooperation with Günter Grass as well as the Felix Meritis Foundation, European Center for Arts, Culture & Science.

Commissioned by, among others, the Universities of Amsterdam and Maastricht, he initiated the Amsterdam-Maastricht Summer University (1989) that in 2015 launched an MBA on Culture, Heritage & Citizenship. Austen's contributions to the identity debate, international cultural policy and citizenship education programs have been published in newspapers, magazines, and books in the Netherlands and abroad as well as through his TV portraits with leading European personalities.

In 2004 he was asked to join the team of "A Soul for Europe" in Berlin as an expert to advise the board of trustees under the presidency of Richard von Weizsäcker. He assisted in the rejuvenation of the initiative and now is member of the board of managers of this European legal body (EEIG).