

† 10 January 2018

Horst SEEFELD

SOC, GERMANY (1970-1989)

Horst Seefeld, who already had 10 years' experience as a delegated MEP under his belt, was a leading figure in the new Parliament which we joined after the first European elections in 1979. His school years were marked by exposure to Nazi ideology and the chaos of war and in 1945, at the age of 15, living in the ruins of Berlin, he pledged his life to democracy and the SPD, to a future free of dictatorship and war. Elected to the German Bundestag in 1969, he found his political calling in the unification of Europe. He began his EU parliamentary career as a delegated MEP and was then directly elected in 1979. He was a social democrat through and through, but never doctrinaire. He was a committed European, both emotionally and intellectually, but a pragmatic one. He was an affable colleague who was resolute in standing up for what he believed in. As Chair of the Transport Committee, he convinced Parliament to initiate proceedings before the European Court of Justice against the Council of Transport Ministers for failure to act, and the court ruled in Parliament's - and his - favour. His parliamentary career ended in 1989 when he retired from his position as Vice-President, after which he continued to work for European unification in many different capacities. Horst Seefeld died at the age of 87 in his home town, Bretten.

— *By Klaus Hänsch, Former President of the European Parliament*