

## Marie-Elisabeth Lüders (1932)

### Abstract

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Together with Agnes von Zahn-Harnack, Marie-Elisabeth Lüders was one of the first women to be allowed to enroll at Friedrich Wilhelm University in Berlin. She began her studies in 1909 and earned a Ph.D. in political science in 1912. During the First World War, Lüders held leading positions in various social welfare organizations, and in 1916 she took charge of the Central Labor Office for Women at the Imperial War Ministry in Berlin. Lüders fought for women's rights and disarmament as both a Reichstag representative for the German Democratic Party (1919-32) and as a delegate at many international conferences. In the post-WWII period, she represented the Free Democratic Party in the Bundestag (1953-61), served as *Alterspräsidentin* (Mother of the House), and sat on the committee on legal affairs, the committee on all-German affairs, and the committee on domestic affairs. As a liberal Protestant, Lüders was the political antithesis to Franz-Josef Wuermeling, the conservative Catholic federal minister of family affairs. She played an important role in improving the legal status of German women who were married to foreign nationals (through the so-called *Lex Lüders*), and she was also instrumental in structuring and implementing the constitutionally guaranteed principle of equality for the sexes, which finally, through the Equality Act of 1957, amended the civil code to put this 1949 Basic Law principle into law. This photo shows Lüders at the League of Nations Disarmament Conference in Geneva in 1932.

### Source

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Source: Marie-Elisabeth Lüders, German politician and women's rights activist, at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. Unknown photographer.

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