

---

# SIMON FRASER

**LONDON  
SPEAKER  
BUREAU**

- **Former Head of the UK Diplomatic Service and Permanent Secretary at the UK Foreign Office**



## Topics

- Arts & Culture
- Business
- Government
- Leadership
- Management
- Motivation
- Politics

Simon Fraser recently completed five years as Permanent Secretary at the UK Foreign Office (FCO) and Head of the UK Diplomatic Service. This crowned a public service career in which he also served as Permanent Secretary at the UK Business Department and in Brussels as Chief of Staff to EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson.

Simon has worked at the top levels of international diplomacy, trade and economic policy and the European Union. He has specialised in operating at the interface between government and business. He sat for five years on the UK National Security Council. An Arabic speaker, he spent the early years of his career in the British Embassies in Iraq and Syria.

Simon is fascinated by the challenges of leadership in complex organisations. At the FCO he led a global network of 14,000 people in 168 countries. Through his Diplomatic Excellence programme of reforms focussed on policy, people and network, he rebuilt the confidence of the institution. He opened or upgraded 15 embassies and created 300 new diplomatic jobs in emerging markets, while taking 25% out of FCO running costs and achieving the highest staff engagement score of any major UK government department.

In 2009 Simon led one of Whitehall's most complex organisational change programmes, merging two departments to create the new Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS), with a budget of £20 billion and the policy lead on business, regulation, higher education, science and skills.

Simon believes that the keys to successful leadership are a commitment to excellence, personal integrity, clear vision, compelling communication and above all relationships of trust and respect with other people. In 2014/15 he was the UK Civil Service's champion for inclusion and diversity. He argues that high performing organisations benefit from a workforce with different experience, backgrounds and ways of thinking, and that diverse leadership teams make better decisions.