

Emma Harriet Nicholson, Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne is a British politician, who has been a life peer since 1997 in the House of Lords, The Parliament of The United Kingdom. She was elected as the Conservative Member of Parliament for Torridge and West Devon in 1987, before switching to the Liberal Democrats in 1995. She was also Liberal Democrat Member of the European Parliament for South East England from 1999 to 2009. In 2016, she announced she was re-joining the Conservative Party "with tremendous pleasure". Baroness Nicholson is The Prime Minister's Trade Envoy for the nations of Iraq, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan.

Early life

- Born in Oxford and a descendant of the family which founded London gin distillers J&W Nicholson & Co, Lady Nicholson is the third of four daughters of Sir Godfrey Nicholson, Bt and his wife, Lady Katharine (the fifth daughter of the 27th Earl of Crawford).
- Her uncle was Lord Chancellor in the 1960s, and his daughter, her cousin Eliza Manningham-Buller, became Director General of MI5.
- She was diagnosed with major sensory disorder at the age of 16. She was educated at St Mary's School, Wantage and the Royal Academy of Music.

Career

- Prior to her political career, she worked as a computer software developer, systems analyst, computer and management consultant. She led large teams both in the UK and Africa, developing Government contracts in the MoD, DfE and the Home Office (1962-1974) and in the governments of Zambia and Zimbabwe.
- She also worked as a director of the Save the Children Foundation from 1974 to 1985.
- She contested the constituency of Blyth in 1979 but was defeated. She was elected a Conservative Member of Parliament for Torridge and West Devon in 1987, having acted as vice-chairman of the Conservative Party between 1983 and 1987. She joined the Liberal Democrats in 1995, telling Robin Oakley, the BBC's Political Editor: "The Conservative Party has changed so much, while my principles have not changed at all. I would argue that it is not so much a case of my leaving the party, but the party leaving me."

- She was succeeded by John Burnett, Baron Burnett in 1997, when Tony Blair won his landslide. That year, Nicholson was made a life peer as Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne, in the Royal County of Berkshire.

The European Parliament

- Baroness Nicholson became a member of the European Parliament in 1999. During her tenure, she served as the First Vice-President of the Committee on Foreign Affairs (2004-2007) and the third Vice-Chair of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defense Policy (1999-2004).
- Lady Nicholson chaired and co-chaired countless high-level EP meetings and worked as an EP Rapporteur for Kashmir, Romania and Iraq and Shadow Rapporteur for other AFET Reports, promoting human rights and democracy internationally. In addition, she authored reports and led missions to NATO, the UN, EU applicant countries and the Council of Europe member states. She was also the President of the Delegation for Relations with Iraq, President of the Committee on Women's Rights of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly, and a member of the subcommittee on Human Rights, the Delegation for relations with Iran and the Delegation for relations with the Mashreq countries.
- She has led and was a member of international Election Observation teams for national elections in a wide variety of countries while serving in the European Parliament (i.e., Lebanon, Armenia, Pakistan, Yemen, Moldova; 34 nations in all over her parliamentary time in the office).
- While serving as the Vice-Chair of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defense Policy in the European Parliament, she served as the Rapporteur for Romania. Using data and computer skills, she tracked down twelve child trafficking networks and reported the flaws in the legislation related to child protection. As a result, the country's laws were changed to comply with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Lady Nicholson stood down from the European Parliament at the 2009 elections after which she was appointed to the Parliament of the Council of Europe.

The House of Lords, Parliament of The United Kingdom

- In 2009, Baroness Nicholson returned to London and resumed her political work at the House of Lords. In February 2010, she founded the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Business Development in Iraq and the Regions and has served as its Chair.
- She currently serves as a vice chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Music Education and of the APPG for Queen's Platinum Jubilee 2022. Baroness Nicholson also served as the Chairman of the Select Committee, Sexual Violence in Conflict Committee (2015).
- She resigned the Liberal Democrat whip in July 2016, to sit as a non-affiliated member. However, on 10 September 2016, she announced she was re-joining the Conservative Party "with tremendous pleasure" and would sit on the Conservative benches in the House of Lords. Listing her reasons for rejoining the Tories, she highlighted Theresa May's education speech on 9 September as evidence that the prime minister "leads a party with a real commitment to delivering for the next generation and building a country that works for everyone".
- Baroness Nicholson visited Kazakhstan as Prime Minister's Trade Envoy on 28 April 2019. The six-day visit was focused on expanding trade relations with the Central Asian country.

Other work

- Lady Nicholson is the founder and current Chair of AMAR ICF, an award-winning charity working in the Middle East, helping vulnerable communities to rebuild their lives (1991 – Present).
- She is Executive Chairman of the Iraq Britain Business Council, an organisation which facilitates business, trade investment, human resources, training and transfer of technology and know-how into the Republic of Iraq. Lady Nicholson is the Patron of the British Council's Creative Spark, Patron and the first Chair of The Blind in Business Charitable Trust and the Patron of The Little Foundation, a charity for Cerebral Palsy Research.
- Lady Nicholson is also a former member of the American Bar Association's Middle East North Africa Council.
- Baroness Nicholson fought successfully for the release from Zambian prison of South African national Katiza Cebekhulu, the "missing witness" in the case of the death of Stompie Seipei. The South African national had been part of the so-called Mandela United Football Club, the bodyguards of Winnie Mandela. She enabled and accompanied Cebekulu to give his evidence against Winnie Mandela at the Truth and Reconciliation court sitting chaired by the

Archbishop Tutu. She supported his asylum application for the UK which was successful. Mr. Cebekhulu later claimed that Nicholson had demanded £50,000 from him to obtain copyright over a book she had Fred Bridgland write about him; Nicholson denied this, saying her motives were "exclusively humanitarian and honourable" and added that Mr. Cebekulu held the copyright already.

- Baroness Nicholson is also the Founding President of the Caine Prize for African Writing and the Immediate Past Chair of the Booker Prize for Russian Fiction (2000-2020). She also served as the Former Chair of the Advisory Council of the Bank of Azerbaijan (2013-2015).

Personal Life

- On 9 May 1987, Nicholson married Sir Michael Harris Caine, with whom she had a foster son Amar Kanim, who was rescued from Iraq after surviving a napalm attack in March 1991. She set up the Amar Foundation to support projects in Iraq. She was widowed in 1999. She is the Founding President of the Council of the Caine Prize for African Writing, which was named after her late husband.

Awards and Honours

- In 2017, Lady Nicholson received an honorary doctorate in International Leadership and Humanitarian Service from Brigham Young University in the United States for her charity and humanitarian work across the Middle East.
- She has been awarded seven honorary doctorates from universities in the UK, the USA and Romania. She participated as a guest lecturer in the European Parliament to Campus programme at European Centres of New Zealand, University of Canterbury in Christchurch (2015) and in universities in Turkey and Australia.