

Former French Socialist Prime Minister Michel Rocard dies at 85

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Paris: Former French Socialist Prime Minister Michel Rocard died on Saturday at age 85, the office of President Francois Hollande said in a statement.

Michel Rocard

Rocard, a Socialist who served as French Prime Minister from 1988 to 1991 under the presidency of Francois Mitterrand, was one of the most ardent European federalist, as he spent complete 15 years in the European parliament and resigned in 2009.

He was briefly the first secretary of the Socialist Party from 1993 to 1995, Xinhua reported.

"A great figure of the Republic and the left has just disappeared," French President Francois Hollande said in a statement.

"Michel Rocard was a realist dreamer, a radical reformist animated by the movement of ideas, the fate of the planet and of human destiny," Hollande said.

"Miche Rocard had a great conception of political responsibility. He insisted on straight-talking," Hollande added.

French Prime Minister Manuel Valls called Rocard "a fighter for the decolonization, for the decentralization, a world citizen, and a pioneer for the fight against global warming."

"He will always remain an example of integrity, intelligence and passion," Valls said.